GRANDMASTER PROFILES

JOEL BENJAMIN

Joel Benjamin

Selected Games of the United States Champion

Bill Haines & Eric Schiller

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Introduction

By Eric Schiller

Joel Benjamin is indisputably one of the greatest American players in history. He has set records in the U.S. Championship, and has represented the United States in many Olympiads and World Team Championships. He was selected as the grandmaster consultant on the Deeper Blue project, and his contributions helped the computer defeat Garry Kasparov in 1997.

Benjamin is also a highly respected author, with many articles in Chess Life and other prestigious publications. He edited the delightful magazine Chess Chow throughout its existence. He co-authored (with me) *Unorthodox Openings* published by Batsford, and is working on two new volumes on "new wave" openings.

He will eventually get around to producing a critical analysis of his own games. At present, however, there are no available collections of his games, so this little booklet is offered as an introduction to the play of the United States Champion.

Joel was born November 3, 1964 in Brooklyn, New York. His father, Alan, is a noted chess organizer and his mother is also an active chess player. Benjamin quickly established a relationship with the famed Manhattan Chess Club. There he faced top competition, even in the weekly rapids competitions.

Early years

Joel rose quickly through the ranks, enjoying the rich chess culture of his native New York. He made National Master in 1977 at the age of 13.

IM

His participation in many international events gave him opportunities for norms, and in 1980 he got the International Master Title at 16, which was still an impressive achievement at the time.

GM

It took six years for Joel to earn his Grandmaster title, which he received in 1986 at the age 22.

US Championships

Benjamin has played in a record 16 consecutive US Championships, and after this

year's competition he will be tie Robert Byrne for second place behind Sammy Reshevsky, whose mark of 21 is likely to fall early next century.

He is in the top ten for most finishes in the top 3 places, tied with Benko and Kavalek at 5 for 8th place.

Here is his amazing record, from his debut as a 17-year old to his latest championship. For each year we give his place and the number of participants. No other player managed to qualify even to take part in all of these championships!

1981 13th/15
1982 (no championship)
1983 5th=/14
1984 9th=/18
1985 **Second**/14
1986 2nd=/16
1987 **First**/14
1988 4th=/12
1989 5th=/16
1990 5th=/16[1]
1991 **Second**/16[2]
1992 7th=/16
1993 8th=/12
1994 4th=/14
1995 7th=/14
1996 6th=/14
1997 **First**/16

[1] Eliminated second round of knockout by Christiansen.

[2] Eliminated in final round of knockout by Kamsky.

World Championship Cycles

Benjamin's first attempt was at the Interzonal in Szirak,1987. It was not a great success.

He suffered bad luck at Groningen, both in the 1993 Professional Chess Association competition and at the 1997 FIDE World Championship qualifier. The more recent event saw him battle valiantly through the tie-breaks, only to fall in the end.

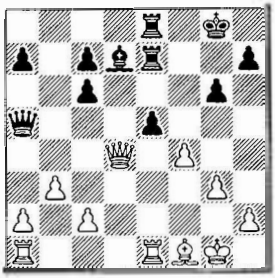
Nevertheless, one suspects he will make more of his future opportunities. He'll be back in the United States Championship this year, and no doubt for many years to come.

Bill Haines, editor of many important tournament bulletins, has selected 64 games which are representative of Benjamin's play. I've added some light notes. We hope you'll enjoy playing over these fascinating struggles.

Games

1 Benjamin $_{2320}$ - Feuerstein,A $_{2305}$
[A04] New York, 1976

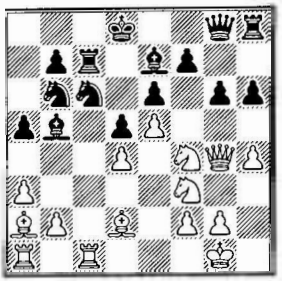
Every aspiring master in New York had to get past Manhattan Chess Club stalwart Arthur Feuerstein at some point. It didn't take Joel long! 1.Nf3 f5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 g6 4.b3 Bg7 5.Bb2 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.d3 e5 8.Nbd2 e4? 9.dxe4 fxe4 10.Nxe4! Nxe4 11.Qd5+ Rf7 12.Bxg7 Kxg7 13.Qxe4 Nc6 14.Nd4 Bd7 15.Nxc6 bxc6 16.Qd4+ Kg8 17.e4 Qg5 18.f4 Qa5 19.Rfe1 Re8 20.Bf1 Rfe7 21.e5 dxe5?



22.Bc4+ Kf8 23.Rxe5 Rxe5 24.fxe5 Qb6 25.Rf1+ 1-0

2 Benjamin $_{2320}$ - Seirawan,Y $_{2485}$
[C05] USA, 1979

Joel defeats rival Yasser Seirawan, one of America's stars. 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.Bd3 c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.Ngf3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Nb6 9.0-0 Bd7 10.Re1 Nb4 11.Bb1 Bb5 12.Nf1 Be7 13.Ng3 a5 14.Nh5 Kf8 15.h4 h6 16.Nh2 g6 17.Nf4 Ke8 18.Qg4 Kd7 19.Nf3 Qg8 20.Bd2 Rc8 21.a3 Nc6 22.Rc1 Rc7 23.Ba2 Kd8



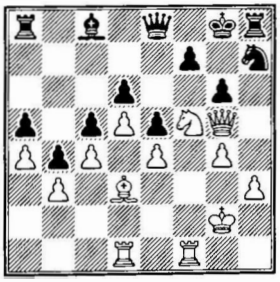
24.Rxc6 bxc6 25.Bxa5 Rb7 26.a4 Ba6 27.b4 Qe8 28.b5 cxb5 29.Nxe6+ fxe6 30.Qxe6 Qd7 31.Bxb6+ Kc8 32.Bxd5 Qxe6 33.Bxe6+ Kb8 34.axb5 Bxb5 35.Bd5 1-0

3 Browne,W $_{2540}$ - Benjamin $_{2350}$
[B38] Lone Pine, 1980

Six-time US Champion Walter Browne found a new rival in this game. 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 c5 4.Nc3 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Bg7 6.e4 0-0 7.Be2 Nc6 8.Be3 b6 9.0-0 Bb7 10.f3 Rc8 11.Rc1 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Bh6 13.Rc2 Nh5 14.g3 Ng7 15.f4 f5 16.Rd2 Bc6 17.e5 Ne6 18.Be3 g5 19.Bf3 Qe8 20.Bh5 Qd8 21.Bf3 Qe8 22.Bh5 Qd8 23.Nb5 gxf4 24.gxf4 Kh8 25.Rff2 Rg8+ 26.Kf1 Rg7 27.Nxa7 Qg8 28.Ke2 Nxf4+ 29.Bxf4 Qxc4+ 30.Rd3 Bxf4 31.Nxc6 Qe4+ 32.Kf1 Rcg8 33.Rg3 Rxg3 34.hxg3 Qh1+ 35.Ke2 Qxh5+ 36.Rf3 Rxg3 37.Nd4 Rg2+ 38.Kd3 Rd2+ 39.Qxd2 Bxd2 40.Kxd2 Qh2+ 41.Kd3 e6 0-1

4 Rajkovic,D 2495 - Benjamin 2350
[E61] Lone Pine, 1980

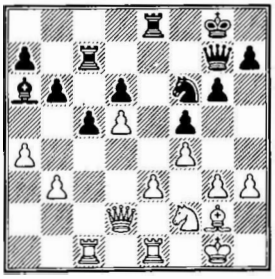
After queenside play is locked, Joel turns to the kingside and gets into a tactical melee, where his deep understanding of the position prevails. 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.e3 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Nc3 0-0 6.Be2 Na6 7.0-0 d6 8.b3 b6 9.Bb2 Bb7 10.Qd2 Nc7 11.Rfd1 a6 12.h3 Qb8 13.a4 Rc8 14.d5 b5 15.Bd3 b4 16.Ne4 Re8 17.Ng3 e5 18.e4 Qd8 19.Rf1 Bc8 20.Rae1 a5 21.Qd1 Na6 22.Bc1 Nb8 23.Nh2 Qe7 24.f3 h5 25.Bg5 Qf8 26.Qd2 Nh7 27.Be3 Nd7 28.Kh1 Qe7 29.Ne2 Bf6 30.g4 hxg4 31.fxg4 Bh4 32.Rd1 Ng5 33.Ng1 Kg7 34.Kg2 Rh8 35.Nhf3 Nxf3 36.Nxf3 Kg8 37.Bg5 Bxg5 38.Qxg5 Qe8 39.Nh4 Nf8 40.Nf5 Nh7



41.Nxd6 Nxg5 42.Nxe8 Nxh3 43.Rh1 Nf4+ 44.Kg1 Rxh1+ 45.Kxh1 Kf8 46.Nf6 Ke7 47.g5 Nh3 48.d6+ Ke6 49.Kg2 Nxg5 50.Nd5 Kxd6 51.Be2 Bh3+ 52.Kg1 Kc6 53.Ne7+ Kc7 0-1

5 Benjamin 2405 - Browne,W 2570
[E12] U.S. Championship, 1981

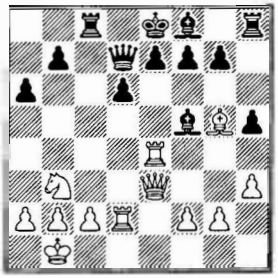
This time the battle with Browne takes place in the championship, which was also a qualifier for the World Championship. 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 b6 4.a3 c5 5.d5 Ba6 6.Qc2 exd5 7.cxd5 d6 8.Nc3 g6 9.g3 Bg7 10.Bg2 0-0 11.0-0 Re8 12.Bf4 Nh5 13.Bg5 Qc7 14.Rfe1 Nd7 15.Rac1 Rac8 16.a4 Nhf6 17.h3 Ne5 18.Nxe5 Rxe5 19.Qd2 Ree8 20.Bh6 Bxh6 21.Qxh6 Qe7 22.Qd2 Nd7 23.b3 Qe5 24.e3 f5 25.f4 Qg7 26.Nd1 Nf6 27.Nf2 Rc7



28.e4 Rce7 29.e5 dxe5 30.d6 Re6 31.fxe5 Rxe5 32.Rxe5 Rxe5 33.b4 Qd7 34.Rd1 cxb4 35.Qxb4 Re6 36.Qb3 Bc8 37.Rc1 Kf8 38.Rc7 Qd8 39.Qc3 Bd7 40.Rxa7 Be8 41.Qc1 g5 42.Qxg5 Re1+ 43.Bf1 Bf7 44.Qd2 Re5 45.Bg2 Ra5 46.Rxa5 bxa5 47.Qd4 Bd5 48.Qe5 Bxg2 49.Kxg2 Kg8 50.Qe6+ Kg7 51.Qxf5 Qxd6 52.Qxa5 Qc6+ 53.Kh2 Kg6 54.Qb4 Qd5 55.Qc3 Kf7 56.Qc7+ Kg6 57.Qc3 Qa2 58.Qd4 h5 59.Kg2 Kf7 60.Kg1 1-0

6 Kupreichik,V $_{2480}$ - Benjamin $_{2520}$
[B60] Hastings, 1984

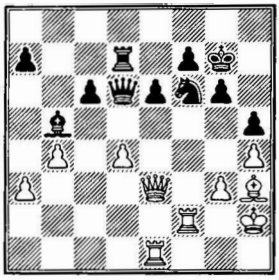
In the venerable Hastings tournament Benjamin takes out a famous Grandmaster. 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bg5 Qb6 7.Be3 a6 8.Qd2 Qc7 9.Nd5 Nxd5 10.exd5 Ne5 11.0-0-0 Bd7 12.h3 Nc4 13.Bxc4 Qxc4 14.Nb3 Bf5 15.Rhe1 Rc8 16.Re2 h5 17.Kb1 Be4 18.Bf4 Bxd5 19.Qe3 Be6 20.Rd4 Qc6 21.Re4 Qd7 22.Bg5 Bd5 23.Rd4 Bc4 24.Red2 Be6 25.Re4 Bf5



26.Rh4 f6 27.Nd4 fxg5 28.Qxg5 Rc5 29.Qe3 g5 30.Nxf5 Qxf5 31.Rhd4 Re5 32.Qc3 Bg7 33.Qc7 Rc5 34.Qb8+ Rc8 35.Qxb7 Bxd4 36.g4 hxg4 37.hxg4 Qe6 38.a4 Bf6 39.f4 gxf4 40.g5 Bxg5 0-1

7 Dzindzichashvili,R $_{2520}$ - Benjamin $_{2520}$
[D79] U.S. Championship, 1984

Again Benjamin emerges from a blocked position to fight a tactical brawl. 1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 d5 3.Bg2 c6 4.c4 g6 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.d4 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Nc3 Nc6 9.Ne5 e6 10.Bf4 Nd7 11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Na4 Ba6 13.Re1 Qa5 14.Bd6 Rfc8 15.b4 Qd8 16.Nc5 Bc4 17.Qd2 Bf8 18.Bxf8 Kxf8 19.Nb7 Qe7 20.Na5 Nb6 21.e3 Bb5 22.Bf1 Rc7 23.a3 h5 24.h4 Kg7 25.Rac1 Rac8 26.Kh2 Nd7 27.f3 Nf6 28.Bh3 Ba4 29.e4 dxe4 30.fxe4 Rd8 31.e5 Ng8 32.Qf2 Nh6 33.Rc3 Rcd7 34.Rd3 Rd5 35.Rd2 R8d7 36.Nc4 Bb5 37.Nd6 R5xd6 38.exd6 Qxd6 39.Qe3 Ng8 40.Rf2 Nf6



41.d5 Qxd5 42.a4 Bc4 43.Rc1 Qd4 44.Qf4 Ne4 45.Rfc2 Bd5 46.b5? 46.Re2 would still have been ugly for White, but the text loses quickly. 46...e5 47.Qf1 Nd2 48.Qe2 Nf3+ 0-1

8 Henley,R $_{2495}$ - Benjamin $_{2520}$
[E45] U.S. Championship, 1984

Joel has to wait patiently until a chance presents itself as time control is reached. 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 b6 5.Nge2 Ba6 6.a3 Be7 7.Nf4 d6 8.b4 c6 9.Bb2 0-0 10.Be2 e5 11.Nh3 Nbd7 12.0-0 Re8 13.Re1 Bf8 14.Qa4 Bb7 15.Rad1 a6 16.Qb3 h6 17.a4 a5 18.b5 exd4 19.exd4 cxb5 20.cxb5 d5 21.Nf4 Bb4 22.Nd3 Bxc3

23.Bxc3 Ne4 24.Bb2 Rc8 25.Bf1 Qf6 26.f3 Nd6 27.Ne5 Nf8 28.Rc1 Ne6 29.Nc6 Qg5 30.Re5 Nf5 31.Rce1 Bxc6 32.bxc6 Red8 33.Qd3 g6 34.g4 Nf4 35.Qb5 h5 36.c7 Rxc7

37.Re8+? 37.Qxb6 hxg4 38.Qxc7 gxf3+ 39.Kh1 f2 40.Qxd8+ Qxd8 41.Re8+ Kg7! Black wins! 37...Rxe8 38.Qxe8+? 38.Rxe8+ Kh7 39.Qxb6 hxg4 40.Qxc7 gxf3+ 41.Kh1 and Black cannot continue the attack. 38...Kh7 39.Qe5 39.h3 Nh4! 40.Re3 Ne6! White is busted, since Black's queen will sneak in on the dark squares. 39...Re7! 0-1

9 Gurevich,D 2505 - Benjamin 2520

[E92] U.S. Championship, 1984

Another adventure in the land past time control. 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.Be3 h6 8.dxe5 Ng4 9.Bf4 Nxe5 10.Qd2 Kh7 11.0-0 Nbc6 12.Rac1 Re8 13.h3 b6 14.Be3 Bb7 15.Nh2 Nd7 16.Ng4 h5 17.Nh2 Nc5 18.f3 f5 19.Nd5 fxe4 20.b4 Ne6 21.fxe4 Ne5 22.Nf3 Kg8 23.Ng5 Qd7 24.Nxe6 Rxe6 25.Rf2 c6 26.Nf4 Rf6 27.Rd1 Qf7 28.Qc2 Rf8 29.Rdf1 Bh6 30.c5 dxc5 31.Qc3 Qe8 32.bxc5 b5 33.g3 Bg7 34.Bd4 R6f7 35.Nxg6 Nxg6 36.Bxg7 Rxg7 37.Bxh5 Rxf2 38.Rxf2 Bc8 39.Qf6 Kh7 40.e5 Be6 41.Rf4 Kg8 42.a4 bxa4 43.Rxa4

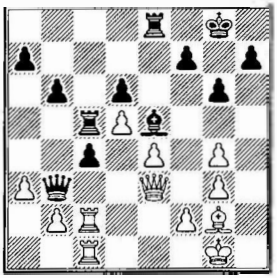
43...Qe7! The pin on the knight is broken. 44.Rd4 44.Bxg6 Qxf6 45.exf6 Rxg6 could not be held, as the bishop can protect the c-pawn. 46.g4 Rxf6 47.Rxa7 Rf3 will win. 44...Nf8 45.Rd6 Rxg3+ 46.Kf2 Qxf6+ 47.exf6 Rg5 48.Be8 Rxc5 49.Bxc6 Kf7 50.Ke3 Kxf6 51.Kd4 Rc4+ 52.Kd3 Rh4 53.Rd8 Ng6 54.Kc3 0-1

10 Browne,W 2530 - Benjamin 2540

[E12] U.S. Championship, 1985

Browne has not had an easy time playing against Benjamin. Here he loses a theoretical battle. 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3 c5 5.d5 Ba6 6.Qc2 exd5 7.cxd5 g6 8.Nc3 Bg7 9.g3 0-0 10.Bg2 d6 11.0-0 Re8 12.Re1 Nbd7 13.Bf4 Qe7 14.h3 Ne4 15.Nxe4 Qxe4 16.Qd2 Nf6 17.Rad1 Rad8 18.Nh2 Qc4 19.Bg5 Rc8 20.Bxf6 Bxf6 21.Ng4 Bg7 Black has full equality, at

least. 22.e4 22.Nh6+ Bxh6 23.Qxh6 Rxe2 24.Rxe2 Qxe2 is already better for Black. 22...Qa4 23.Qf4 Be2 24.Rd2 Bxg4! 25.hxg4 Be5 26.Qe3 c4 27.Rc1 Rc5 28.Rdc2 Qb3!



29.Rxc4 29.Qe2 would have been better. 29...Qxe3 30.fxe3 Bxb2 31.Rxc5 bxc5 32.Rb1 Bxa3 33.Ra1 Bb2 34.Rxa7 Be5 Bishops of opposite color can't save this one. 35.Kf2 c4 36.Bf1 c3 37.Bd3 Rb8 38.Ra2 Rb2+ 39.Rxb2 cxb2 40.g5 0-1

11 Hansson,D - Benjamin 2540
[C16] Reykjavik, 1986

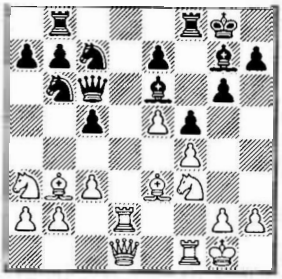
The Reykjavik Grand Open was not one of Joel's career highlights, but he did play a few good games. 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 b6 5.a3 Bf8 6.Nf3 Qd7 7.Bf4 A new move, but Joel had no problem reacting properly. 7...Ne7 8.b4 c6 9.Bd3 Ba6 10.0-0 Ng6 11.Be3 Be7 12.Ne2 Qb7 13.Ng3 Nd7 14.Nh5 0-0 15.Re1 Bxd3 16.Qxd3 a5 Black is better, with pressure at b4 and a strong queenside initiative. 17.Rab1 17.Bg5 might have been tried. 17...Qa6 18.Qd2 Rfc8 19.Bg5 Bf8 20.h4 axb4 21.axb4 Qc4 22.c3 Ra2 23.Qc1 Rca8 24.Ng3 h6 25.h5 Ne7 26.Bf4 Qd3 27.Re3

27...Qh7! Retreating along the f1-a6 diagonal would seem more logical, but Benjamin appreciates the importance of the b1 square. 28.Ne1 c5 29.bxc5 bxc5 30.Rb7 Nb8 31.Qb1 Qxb1! 32.Rxb1 Ra1 33.Rxa1 Rxa1 34.Kh2 The pin is broken, but control of the 8th rank, pressure at d4, and a much better bishop add up to a decisive advantage. 34...Nec6 35.Nf3 Nd7 36.Re2 Nb6 37.Be3 c4! The pawn structure is set in concrete, and White's bishop is terrible. 38.Re1 Ra3 39.Ne2 Na4 40.Rc1 Ra2 41.Bd2 Na5 42.Rb1 Nb3 43.Be1? A tactical blunder, but the game was beyond salvation. 43...Rxe2! 0-1

12 Gurevich,D 2505 **- Benjamin** 2540
[B06] U.S. Championship, 1986

1.d4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.c3 d6 4.f4 Nf6 5.e5 Nd5 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Bd3 c5 8.0-0 Nc6 9.Be4 dxe5 10.dxe5 Nb6 11.Na3 Be6 12.Qe2 Qc8 13.Qb5 Nb8 14.Be3 Na6 15.Rad1 Rb8 16.Ng5 Bg4

17.Rd2 f6 18.Nf3 Bf5 19.Qb3+ Be6 20.Qd1 f5 21.Bc2 Qc6 22.Bb3 Nc7



Benjamin's defensive formation is original, but quite solid. **23.Bxe6+ Nxe6 24.Qb3 Kh8 25.Kf2 g5 26.g3 gxf4 27.gxf4 Bh6 28.Qb5 Qe4 29.Re1?** 29.Bxc5 Nxc5 30.Qxc5 Qxf4 is unclear. **29...Bxf4 30.Bxf4 Qxf4 31.Qb3 Ng5! 32.c4** Black wins a rook, and the game. **32...Nxf3 33.Qxf3 Qxd2+ 34.Re2 Qd4+ 35.Kf1 Rg8 36.Rf2 Nxc4 0-1**

13 Rohde,M 2500 - Benjamin 2540

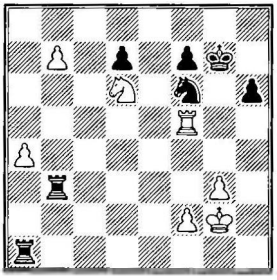
[E13] U.S. Championship, 1986

Benjamin preserves a healthier pawn structure into an endgame, where he soon gains material advantage. **1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 b6 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bh4 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 Bb7 8.e3 d6 9.Bd3 Nbd7 10.0-0 Qe7 11.Nd2 g5 12.Bg3 h5 13.f3 h4 14.Bf2 0-0-0 15.a4 a5 16.Rb1 g4 17.fxg4 h3 18.g3 Rhg8 19.Be2 Ne4 20.Bf3 Nxd2 21.Bxb7+ Kxb7 22.Qxd2 Rxg4 23.Qe2 f5 24.Qf3+ Re4 25.Qh5 Nf6 26.Qxh3 Rg4 27.Qg2+ Ne4 28.Be1 Qd7 29.Rb5 Ka7 30.Rf4 Rdg8 31.Rxg4 Rxg4 32.Qe2 Qc6 33.d5 Qd7 34.dxe6 Qxe6 35.Rd5 Ng5 36.Rd4 c5 37.Rxg4 fxg4 38.e4 Nf3+ 39.Kf2 Qf6 40.Kg2 Qh6 41.h4 gxh3+ 42.Kh1 Ne5 43.Bd2 Qe6 44.Bf4 Nxc4 45.Kh2 b5 46.axb5 Kb6 47.Qc2 Kxb5 48.Qb3+ Ka6 49.Qc2 Na3 50.Qd3+ Nb5**

White is fighting to survive, but should have tried 51.c4 followed by Bd2. **51.Qe3** 51.Qd5? Qxd5 52.exd5 Nxc3 53.Bxd6 Kb5 54.g4 Nxd5 55.g5 a4 56.g6 a3 57.g7 Nf6 58.Be5 Ng8 59.Kxh3 Kc4 and Black wins the race by a hair. 60.Kg4 a2 61.Kf5 Kd3 62.Ke6 c4 63.Ba1 c3 64.Kf7 c2 65.Kxg8 c1Q 66.Kf7 Qxa1 67.g8Q Qf1+ 68.Ke7 a1Q **51...Kb6 52.e5 d5 53.Qd3 d4 54.c4 Nc3 55.Bd2 Na2 56.Bxa5+ Kxa5 57.Qa3+ Kb6 58.Qxa2 Qxe5 59.Kxh3 Qf5+ 60.Kg2 Qe4+ 61.Kh3 d3 62.Qb2+ Kc7 63.Qg7+ Kc6 64.Qg8 Kd7 65.g4 Qd4 66.Qf7+ Kd8 67.Qf3 d2 0-1**

14 Gurevich,D 2475 - Benjamin 2555
[A57] Chicago Open, 1986

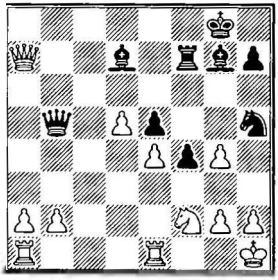
Joel show his technique in a knight and pawn endgame. 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.e3 Bb7 6.Nc3 axb5 7.Bxb5 Qa5 8.Bd2 Qb6 9.Qb3 e6 10.Bc4 Qxb3 11.Bxb3 Na6 12.Nf3 exd5 13.0-0 Be7 14.Rfd1 0-0 15.Be1 Nc7 16.Nh4 g6 17.g3 Rfb8 18.Ng2 Bc6 19.Rab1 c4 20.Bc2 Ne6 21.Nf4 d4 22.exd4 Bf3 23.Nfe2 Bb4 24.d5 Ng5 25.h4 Bxe2 26.hxg5 Bxd1 27.Rxd1 Ne8µ 28.a4 Be7 29.Nb5 Bxg5 30.Bc3 Bf6 31.Bxf6 Nxf6 32.Rd4 Re8 33.Rxc4 Nxd5 34.Rd4 Re1+ 35.Kh2 Nf6 36.Bd1 Kg7 37.b4 Rc8 38.Nd6 Rc1 39.Bf3 Rc2 40.Kg2 Ra1 41.Rf4 g5 42.Rf5 h6 43.b5 g4 44.b6 gxf3+ 45.Kxf3 Rb2 46.b7 Rb3+ 47.Kg2



Tactical play leads to a knight and pawn endgame with an extra pawn for Black. 47...Rxb7 48.Nxb7 Rxa4 49.Nd6 Rd4 50.Nb5 Rd5 51.Rxd5 Nxd5 52.Kf3 Kf6 53.Ke4 Ne7 54.Nc7 h5 55.Ne8+ Kg5 56.f4+ Kg6 57.Ke5 Nf5 58.Nc7 Nxg3 59.Nd5 Nf5 60.Ke4 d6 61.Kf3 Nh6 62.Ke4 Ng8 63.Ne3 Nf6+ 64.Kf3 Ng4 65.Nc4 d5 66.Nb6 Nf6 67.Nc8 Kf5 68.Ne7+ Ke6 69.Nc6 Ne4 70.Nd4+ Kd6 71.Nf5+ Kc5 72.Ng7 h4 73.Nf5 h3 74.Nh6 f6 75.Nf5 Kc4 76.Ne3+ Kd4 77.Nf1 Kd3 78.Nh2 f5 0-1

15 Benjamin 2575 - Nunn,J 2585
[E99] Hastings, 1987

Another battle in the theoretical trenches, this time in the King's Indian. 1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Ne1 Nd7 10.Be3 f5 11.f3 f4 12.Bf2 g5 13.Nb5 Nf6 14.Nxa7 Bd7 15.c5 Rxa7 16.cxd6 Nc8 17.dxc7 Qxc7 18.Bxa7 Nxa7 19.Qb3 Qc5+ 20.Kh1 Nh5 21.Nd3 Qe3 22.Nf2 Qxe2 23.Qxb7 Rf7 24.Qxa7 g4 25.Rfe1 Qb5 26.fxg4



The pawn is taboo, so Black is busted. 26...Nf6 26...Bxg4?! 27.Qa8+ Rf8 28.Qc6 and the queens come off with an easy endgame win thanks to the queenside pawns. There is no way to save the bishop without allowing the exchange. 27.a4 Qb3 28.a5 f3 29.Qb6 fxg2+ 30.Kg1 Qf3 31.Qe3 Qxe3

32.Rxe3 Bf8 33.Rc3 Bb4 34.Rc2 Nxg4 35.a6 Nxf2 36.a7 Nh3+ 37.Kxg2 Rg7+ 38.Kh1 Bg4 39.a8Q+ Bf8 40.Kg2 1-0

16 De la Villa Garcia,J 2485 - Benjamin 2575

[B66] Szirak Interzonal, 1987

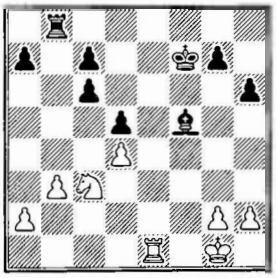
Benjamin could not qualify for the Candidates matches, but he did play some strong chess at the Interzonal. 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bg5 e6 7.Qd2 a6 8.0-0-0 h6 9.Be3 Be7 10.Be2 Nxd4 11.Qxd4 Bd7!? 12.f4 Bc6 13.g4 Nd7 14.Bf3?! Joel found a stronger line after the game: 14.h4 Bf6 15.Qxd6 Bxc3 16.bxc3 Bxe4 17.Rhe1 . 14...b5 15.h4 Qa5 16.a3 Rb8 17.Qd2 Nc5 18.Rhe1 b4 19.Na2 The pieces come flying off the board, leaving Benjamin with a winning endgame. 19...Bxe4! 20.Bxc5 Bxf3 21.Bxb4 Qd8 22.Bxd6 Bxd1 23.Rxd1 Rb6 24.Bxe7 Qxd2+ 25.Kxd2 Kxe7 26.Nb4

Carnage complete, time for finesse! 26...g5! 27.fxg5 hxg5 28.h5 f5 29.gxf5 Rd6+ 30.Nd3 exf5 31.c4 Rxh5 32.c5 Rd8 33.b4 Rh4 34.Kc3 Re4 35.a4 a5 36.b5 Rxa4 37.Re1+ Re4 38.Rxe4+ fxe4 39.Ne5 Ke6 40.Nc6 Rd1 41.b6 e3 42.Nd4+ Kd5 43.b7 Rb1 44.Nb3? 44.c6 e2 45.Nxe2 Kxc6 would, however, only have prolonged the agony. 44...e2 0-1

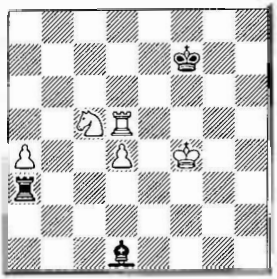
17 Benjamin 2575 - Nunn,J 2585

[A00] Lloyds Bank Masters, 1987

Joel experiments in the opening against the formidable British theoretician. In the end, it is endgame theory, not opening theory, that prevails. 1.Nc3 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Bg5 Bb4 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Qd4 Be7 8.e4 0-0 9.Bd3 h6 10.Bh4 d5 11.e5 Ng4 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.f4 f6 14.0-0 fxe5 15.fxe5 Rxf1+ 16.Rxf1 Qxe5 17.Qxe5 Nxe5 18.Re1 Nxd3 19.cxd3 Kf7 20.d4 Rb8 21.b3 Bf5



22.Na4 Be4 23.Nc5 Re8 24.Kf2 g5 25.Rc1 Bf5 26.Rc3 Kg7 27.b4 h5 28.Ra3 Rb8 29.Ra4 Bc2 30.Rxa7 Rxb4 31.Rxc7+ Kg8 32.Ke3 Rb2 33.a4 Ra2 34.Rxc6 h4 35.Rd6 Bd1 36.Rg6+ Kf7 37.Rxg5 h3 38.gxh3 Rxh2 39.Rxd5 Rxh3+ 40.Kf4 Ra3

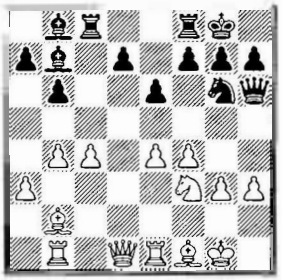


Not an easy endgame, by any means, but Benjamin squeezes out a win. 41.Rd7+ Kf6 42.Rd6+ Ke7 43.Ra6 Kd8 44.a5 Be2 45.Re6 Bc4 46.Rc6 Bb5 47.Re6 Bc4 48.Re3 Ra2 49.Rc3 Bf1 50.d5 Bg2 51.a6 Bxd5 52.Rd3 Kc7 53.Rxd5 Kb6 54.Ke4 Ra1 55.Rh5 Re1+ 56.Kd4 Rd1+ 57.Kc4 Rc1+ 58.Kb4 Rb1+ 59.Kc3 Rc1+ 60.Kb3 Rb1+ 61.Kc3 Rc1+ 62.Kb2 Rg1 63.Rh8 Rg7 64.Rh5 Rg3 65.Rd5 Rh3 66.Kc2 Rg3 67.Kd2 Ra3 68.Ke2 Rh3 69.Kf2 Rh4 70.Kg3 Rb4 71.Rd8 Rc4 72.Rb8+ Ka7 73.Rb7+ Ka8 74.Rc7 Kb8 75.Rb7+ Ka8 76.Rb5 Ka7 77.Kf3 Rd4 78.Ke3 Rd5 79.Ke4 Rd1 80.Ke5 Rd2 81.Rb7+ Ka8 82.Rd7 Rh2 83.Kd5 Rh6 84.Rd6 Rh5+ 85.Kc6 Rh1 86.Rd8+ Ka7 87.Rd7+ Ka8 88.Nd3 Rh6+ 89.Rd6 Rh8 90.Nb4 Rc8+ 91.Kb6 Rb8+ 92.Ka5 Rh8 93.Nd5 Rg8 94.Nc7+ Ka7 95.Nb5+ Ka8 96.a7 Rc8 97.Rb6 Faced with mate in three, Black resigned. The theme is Ka6, then Rb8+ and after the rook is captured, Nc7 mate! 1-0

18 Barlov,D 2495 - Benjamin 2565

[E15] New York Open, 1987

Benjamin combines a kingside attack with effective use of the c-file to create a nice win. 1.Nf3 Nf6 2.d4 e6 3.c4 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.Qb3 Nc6 6.Nbd2 Bb7 7.e4 Na5 8.Qc2 Bb4 9.Bd3 c5 10.dxc5 Bxc5 11.0-0 Rc8 12.Qd1 Ng4 13.a3 Qf6 14.Rb1 Nc6 15.b4 Bd6 16.Bb2 Qh6 17.Re1 Bb8 18.Bf1 0-0 19.h3 Nge5 20.Nxe5 Nxe5 21.f4 Ng6 22.Nf3



22...Nxf4!! 23.gxf4 Bxf4 24.Qe2 f5 25.e5 g5! 26.Bg2 g4! The Black attack breaks through. Later, the king can move to h8 and the rook will come storming in. 27.Nh2 Bxg2 28.Qxg2 Rxc4 29.Rbd1 Kh8 30.Rxd7 Rg8 31.h4 Be3+ 32.Kh1 g3 33.Rxe3 Qxe3 34.Nf3 Rf4 0-1

19 Kuczynski,R 2485 - Benjamin 2565

[B30] St John, 1988

Joel plays too ambitiously in the opening and suffers from structural weaknesses, but in the end, tactics prevail. 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 e6

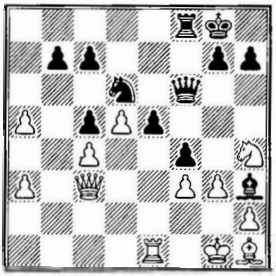
4.0-0 Nge7 5.Nc3 Nd4 6.Nxd4 cxd4 7.Ne2 a6 8.Ba4 b5 9.Bb3 Qb6 10.d3 Bb7 11.Ng3 g6 12.Bg5 Bg7 13.Qd2 f6 14.Bh4 0-0 15.f4 Rae8 16.a4 b4 17.Ne2 f5 18.Bxe7 Rxe7 19.exf5 gxf5 20.a5 Qc5 21.Ra4 Bf6 22.Rxb4 Qxa5 23.Qe1 Ba8 24.Rc4 Rg7 25.Ng3 Qb6 26.Qb4 Qd8 27.Rf2 Bh4 28.Rxd4 Qf6 29.Rd6 Qh6 30.Qd4 Bf6 31.Qe3 Kh8 32.d4 Rfg8 33.d5 Bxb2 34.dxe6 Qf6 35.Rd3 dxe6 36.Qxe6 Qxe6 37.Bxe6 Re8 38.Bd5 a5 39.Bxa8 Rxa8 40.c4 Rb7 41.Nxf5 a4

Benjamin has some counterplay, but White has back rank mate threats, which are overlooked. 42.Nd6? 42.Rfd2 Bf6 43.Rd6 a3 *(43.. Bc3?? 44.Rd8+ Rxd8 45.Rxd8#)* 44.Rxf6 a2 45.Ra6! a1Q+ 46.Rxa1 Rxa1+ 47.Kf2 Ra8 is clearly better for White. 42...Rb3! 43.Nb5 43.Rxb3? axb3 44.Rxb2 Ra1+! 45.Kf2 Ra2! would have been cute finish. 43...Rxd3 44.Rxb2 Rd1+! 45.Kf2 Ra1! The pawn marches on. 0-1

20 Djuric,S 2475 - Benjamin 2565

[E11] **St John, 1988**

The delayed kingside attack is a Benjamin speciality. 1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.d4 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 Qe7 5.g3 Nc6 6.Bg2 Bxd2+ 7.Nbxd2 d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.e4 e5 10.d5 Nb8 11.b4 a5 12.a3 Na6 13.Nb3 Nxe4 14.Nxa5 f5 15.Qc2 Nac5 16.Nh4 Rxa5 17.f3 Ng5 18.bxa5 f4 19.Rab1 Qf6 20.Rb5 Nf7 21.Rxc5 dxc5 22.Bh1 Bh3 23.Re1 Nd6 24.Qc3



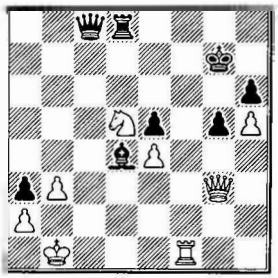
24...g5 This might have been even srronger a move earlier. 25.Ng2 e4! 26.Qxf6 Rxf6 27.Nxf4 27.fxe4 f3 28.e5 f2+! 29.Kf1 fxe1Q+ 30.Kxe1 Rf3 and Black wins. 27...gxf4 28.fxe4 f3 29.Kf2 Nxc4 30.e5 Rf5 31.e6 Kf8 32.Rb1 Nxa5 33.Rb5 b6 34.d6 cxd6 35.Rxb6 Ke7 36.Ra6 c4 37.Ra7+ Kxe6 38.Rxh7 Bg2 0-1

21 Benjamin 2560 - Rohde,M 2565

[B81] **U.S. Championship, 1988**

Benjamin uses the king as a blockader in the middlegame, and then builds up an attack on the enemy position. 1.e4

c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.g4 Nc6 7.g5 Nd7 8.Be3 Be7 9.h4 a6 10.Qe2 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 0-0 12.0-0-0 b5 13.f4 b4 14.Nb1 e5 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.Bf2 Qc7 17.Nd2 Nc5 18.Bh3 a5 19.Bxc8 Rfxc8 20.Bxc5 Qxc5 21.Nb3 Qc7 22.Kb1 a4 23.Nc1 a3 24.b3 Ra6 25.Rh3 Rc6 26.c4 bxc3 27.Kc2 Bc5 28.Rd5 Bd4 29.Qg4 Rd8 30.Ne2 Rcd6 31.Rxd6 Rxd6 32.Rd3 g6 33.Qf3 Qd8 34.Qh3 Kg7 35.Qf3 f6 36.Qg3 Qe7 37.gxf6+ Qxf6 38.Rf3 Qe7 39.Qg5 Qe6 40.h5 Bb6 41.Nxc3 h6 42.Qg3 g5 43.Nd5 Bd4 44.Rf1 Qc8+ 45.Kb1 Rd8

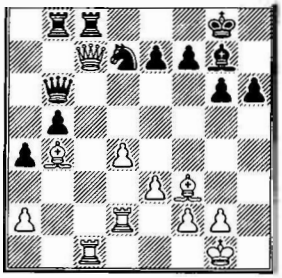


46.Qf3 Qe6 46...Rf8 47.Qxf8+ Qxf8 48.Rxf8 Kxf8 49.Nf6 Kg7 50.Ng4 and White wins. 47.Nc7! Qc6 47...Qe7 48.Qf5!! The twin threat of Ne6+ and Qg6+ are overpowering. 48...Qxc7 49.Qg6+ Kh8 50.Qxh6+ Kg8 51.Qxg5+ Kh8 52.Rf6 wins. 48.Qf5!! Rg8 49.Ne6+ Kh8 50.Qf6+ Kh7 51.Nxg5+! 1-0

22 Benjamin 2565 - Dlugy,M 2550

[D94] Chicago Open, 1988

Old rivals meet with Benjamin chalking up another win. 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.e3 0-0 6.Bd2 c6 7.Rc1 Bg4 8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.Be2 Nxc3 10.Bxc3 Nd7 11.0-0 Nb6 12.h3 Be6 13.b3 h6 14.Qc2 a5 15.Rfd1 a4 16.b4 Qd5 17.Rd2 Bf5 18.Bd3 Bxh3 19.b5 Bg4 20.Ne5 Bd7 21.Bb4 cxb5 22.Be4! Qe6 23.Bxb7 Rab8 24.Nxd7 Nxd7 25.Qc7 Qb6?! 25...Rfe8 would have overprotected e7 and created a useful post at f8. 26.Bf3 Rfc8



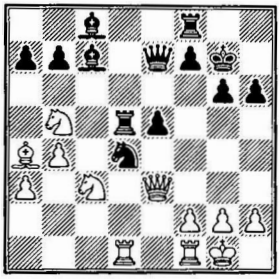
27.Qxc8+ Rxc8 28.Rxc8+ Kh7 29.Rdc2! e5? Black was in trouble anyway, but this insures the loss of the knight at d7. 30.R2c6 Qa7 31.R8c7 Qb8 32.Rxd7 exd4 33.exd4 Qf4 34.Rcc7 Qf5 35.Rxf7 Qb1+ 36.Kh2 Qxb4 37.Rxg7+ Kh8 38.Rh7+ 1-0

23 Benjamin 2545 - Georgiev,K 2590

[E41] Wijk aan Zee, 1989

Kiril Georgiev was one of the world's top players in the late 1980s. **1.d4 e6**

2.c4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Bd3 Nc6 6.Nge2 cxd4 7.exd4 d5 8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.a3 Bd6 10.Be4 Nf6 11.Bg5 0-0 12.Bc2 h6 13.Bxf6 Qxf6 14.Ne4 Qe7 15.Qd3 g6 16.Qe3 Kg7 17.0-0 Bd7 18.Rad1 Rad8 19.N2c3 Bc8 20.Ba4 Bc7 21.b4 e5 22.d5 Nd4 23.Nb5 Rxd5 24.Nec3



24...Rdd8 Black should have considered sacrificing the exchange here. 24...Rxb5 25.Nxb5 Nxb5 26.Bxb5 a6 27.Be2 f5 would give considerable compensation for the exchange. **25.Rxd4 Bb6** 25...Rxd4 26.Nxd4 and the e-pawn is pinned. **26.Rxd8 Bxe3 27.Rxf8 Bxf2+ 28.Rxf2 Kxf8** White could grab the a-pawn now, with a rook and two knights for queen and pawn. Instead, Joel launches an attack. **29.Nd5!? Qg5 30.Bb3 Bh3?** This accomplishes nothing. **31.Nbc3 f5** The knight must not be allowed to use e4. **32.Re2 e4 33.Ne3 h5** 33...Bxg2 34.Nxg2 Qc1+ 35.Nd1 Qxa3 gives Black a queen and 6 pawns against a rook, three minor pieces and one pawn, after the b-pawn falls. This would have been better for Black than in the game. **34.Ncd5 h4 35.Rc2** Black is now in serious trouble. **35...Kg7 36.Kf1 Bg4?** 36...f4 might have saved the day. 37.gxh3 fxe3 38.Re2 Qf5+ 39.Ke1 Qxh3 40.Nxe3 Qf3 41.Bc2 h3 42.Nd5 Qxa3 43.Bxe4 b6 will be hard to crack. **37.Rc7+ Kh6 38.Rf7!** White indirectly controls f4. **38...Bh5 39.Kf2 a6 40.g3!** White needs the f4 square to be covered, so the knight can leave d5. **40...b5 41.Nf6! 1-0**

24 Benjamin 2530 - Rohde,M 2550
[A34] U.S. Championship(2), 1989

Benjamin and Rohde have played many times. This game featured a wild endgame, which Rohde should have won. **1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.Nc3 b6 4.e4 d6 5.d4 cxd4 6.Nxd4 Bb7 7.Bd3 g6 8.0-0 Bg7 9.Bg5 Nbd7 10.Re1 a6 11.Bf1 h6 12.Bh4 0-0 13.Qd2 Nc5 14.f3 e5 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Nc2 Bg5 17.Qf2 f5! 18.exf5 Rxf5 19.Nd5 Bxd5 20.cxd5 Qf6 21.b4 Na4 22.Ne3 Rf4 23.Ng4 Rxg4 24.fxg4 Qxf2+ 25.Kxf2 Nc3**

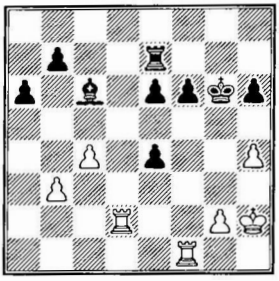
Black has a pawn and a knight for the rook, with more active pieces. Benjamin must concentrate on

defense. 26.Bd3 Kg7 27.g3 Bd2 28.a3 28.Rf1 e4!? 28...Rf8+ 29.Kg2 Bxe1 30.Rxe1 a5 31.bxa5 bxa5 32.Rc1 Nxd5 33.Rc6 Ne3+ 34.Kh3 Rf6 35.Be4 Nd1!? White would have had to play carefully after 35...d5! 36.Rc3 dxe4 37.Rxe3 Rf3 38.Rxe4 Rxa3 39.Rxe5 Kf6 with a difficult endgame. 36.Kh4 Ne3 36...Rf2 should still win! 37.g5! hxg5+ 38.Kxg5 White doesn't seem to have any threats, but they are there. 38...Nf5?? 38...Nf1 39.Rc7+ Rf7 40.Rxf7+ Kxf7 41.Bxg6+ Kg7 42.Be4 Nxh2 43.Bg2 traps the knight. 43...Kf7 44.Kh4 e4 is forced. 45.Bxe4 Nf1 is likely to be a draw. 39.Rc7+ Rf7 40.Rxf7+ Kxf7 41.Bxf5 gxf5 42.Kxf5 The king and pawn endgame is a simple win for White. 42...Kg7 43.g4 Kh6 44.a4 Kg7 45.g5 Kf7 46.h4 Kg7 47.h5 Kh7 48.h6 Kh8 49.g6 Kg8 50.Kf6 e4 51.h7+ 1-0

25 Benjamin 2560 - Schroer,J 2390

[B85]Bermuda Commonwealth, 1990

Benjamin gives up a bishop and two pawns for a rook, but active use of the rooks breaks down the barriers. 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.a4 e6 7.Be2 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4 Nc6 10.Kh1 Nxd4 11.Qxd4 Bd7 12.Bf3 Bc6 13.a5 d5 14.e5 Ne4 15.Bxe4 dxe4 16.Qf2 Bb4 17.Be3 Bxa5 18.Rfd1 Qc7 19.Bc5 Bxc3 20.Bxf8 Bxe5 21.fxe5 Rxf8 22.Qc5 Rc8 23.c4 h6 24.b3 Re8 25.Rd2 Qe7 26.Qxe7 Rxe7 27.Rf1 Kh7 28.h4 Kg6 29.Kh2 f5 30.exf6 gxf6



31.g4! Rh7 32.Rd6 Kf7 33.Rd8 Ke7 34.Rg8 Bd7 35.Rb8 Bc6 36.Rc8 Black must be careful not to drop something to the marauding rooks. 36...Rf7 37.Rd1 h5? 37...f5 38.Rc7+ Kf6 39.Rxf7+ Kxf7 40.Kg3 is difficult for Black, but not hopeless. 38.gxh5 f5 The pawns cannot get moving. 39.Rc7+ Kf6 40.Rxf7+ Kxf7 41.Rg1 The rest was simple. 41...e3 42.h6 e2 43.h7 e1Q 44.Rxe1 Kg7 45.Rxe6 Kxh7 46.Kg3 Kg7 47.Kf4 Kf7 48.Rxc6 bxc6 49.Kxf5 1-0

26 Benjamin 2530 - Brookshear,T

[A09]U.S. Open Jacksonville FL, 1990

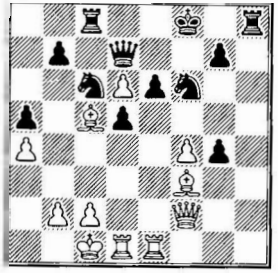
The opening veers slightly from the common paths, and Black is unable to cope after just a few moves. 1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.b4 f6 4.e3 dxe3 5.fxe3 e5 6.c5 e4 7.Nd4 Nc6? 8.Nxc6 bxc6 9.Bc4 Nh6 10.0-0 Qe7 11.Nc3 g6 12.Bb2 Bg7

13.Nxe4!! Qxe4 14.Rf4 Qe7 15.Qf3 Qf8 16.Re4+ Kd8 17.Rd4+ 1-0

27 Benjamin 2530 - Alburt,L 2565

[B03] New York, 1990

Alburt was one of Benjamin's teacher, but the pupil soon learned how to defeat his master. 1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 Nb6?! Alburt tries an experimental move order, but Joel pounces on the inaccuracy. 4.a4 a5 5.Nf3 d5 6.Bd3 Bg4 7.h3 Bxf3 8.Qxf3 e6 9.Qg3± c5 10.dxc5 N6d7 11.Nc3 Nc6 12.Nb5!? Ndxe5 13.Bf4 f6 14.0-0-0*f* Qd7 15.Be3 Rc8 16.Be2 ... f4 16...Qf7 17.f4 Nd7 18.Rhe1 Be7 19.Bg1 19.f5 would be premature. 19...e5 20.Qh4 Kf8! (20...0-0? *21.Rxd5)* 21.Bc4 Nb4 would be roughly level, if complex. 19...f5 20.Bf3 Kf8 20...0-0!? allows 21.Rxe6 but 21...Nb4 provides a little counterplay. White can try 22.Rxe7 Qxe7 23.Nd6 , which looks quite strong. 21.Nd6 Bxd6 22.cxd6 Nf6 23.Bc5 Qd7 24.Qf2 24.Rxe6 Qxe6 25.d7+ Kf7 26.dxc8Q Rxc8 is nothing special. 24...h5? 24...Kf7 25.g4± 25.g4 hxg4 26.hxg4 fxg4



27.f5! Nb4? 27...exf5 28.Bxd5 Nxd5 29.Rxd5 g6 30.Re7! 28.fxe6 Qc6 29.d7+ Kg8 30.dxc8Q+ Qxc8 31.Bxb4 gxf3 32.Bc3 Ne4 33.Rxe4 dxe4 34.Qd4 Qf8 35.Qxe4 f2 36.e7 1-0

28 Benjamin 2560 - Machulsky,A 2560

[A80] New York Open, 1990

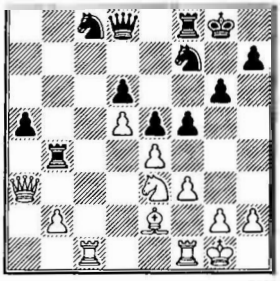
The opening is exciting, but the endgame is where the battle really takes place. 1.d4 e6 2.Nf3 f5 3.e4!? fxe4 4.Ng5 Nf6 5.f3 c5!? 6.fxe4 cxd4 7.Bd3 Nc6 8.0-0 d6 8...Bd6!? is interesting. 9.e5 Nxe5 10.Bxh7 Nxh7 11.Qh5+ g6 12.Qh6µ 9.c3! h6 10.Nf3 Be7 11.cxd4 0-0 12.Nc3 e5 13.Bc4+ Kh7 14.Kh1 Bg4 15.Be3² Rc8 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.Bd5 Bb4 18.h3 Bxf3 19.Rxf3 Qe7 20.Rc1 Bc5 21.Bxc5 Qxc5 22.Be6 Rcd8 23.Nd5 Qd6 24.Nxf6+ Rxf6 25.Qxd6 Rxd6 26.Rxf6 gxf6

27.Bc8 b6 28.Bb7 Nb4? 28.. Nd4 29.Rc7+ Kg6 30.Bd5 a6 was a stronger defense. 29.Rc7+ Kg6 Into the fire. 30.Bc8! Kg5 31.g3 f5 This is needed sooner or later to break the mating net. Black could have tossed in a few checks first. 32.Bxf5 Rd2 33.Rf7 Nc2 34.h4+ Kh5 35.Rg7 Ne3 36.Be6 Rf2 37.Bf7+ Rxf7 38.Rxf7 Kg4 39.Kh2 a5 40.Rf6 b5 41.Rg6+ Kf3 42.h5 Kxe4 43.Kh3 Kf5 44.g4+ Kf4 45.Rf6+ Kg5 46.Rf3 1-0

29 Schussler,H 2490 **- Benjamin** 2530

[E61] **Reykjavik, 1990**

Another strong counter-punching game from Benjamin. 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d6 3.c4 g6 4.Nc3 Bf5 5.Nh4 Bd7 6.e4 e5 7.Nf3 Nc6 8.Be2 Bg7 9.Be3 Ng4 10.Bg5 f6 11.Bc1 0-0 12.d5 Ne7 13.Nd2 Nh6 14.c5 Nf7 15.Qb3 Rb8 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.a4 f5 18.f3 Bh6 19.Nc4 Bxc1 20.Rxc1 Nc8 21.0-0 a6 22.Qb4 b5 23.axb5 Bxb5 24.Nxb5 Rxb5 25.Qa3 a5 26.Ne3 Rb4



Black's pieces are mostly passive and defensive, so Benjamin activates them, even at the cost of a pawn. 27.exf5 Ne7! 28.fxg6 Nxg6 29.g3 A necessary weakness, as otherwise f4 is vulnerable. 29...Rd4 30.Rc2 Ng5 The attack explodes. 31.Kh1 Nh3 32.Bb5 Ng5 33.Be2 Nh3 34.Ba6 Qd7 35.Qc3 Ng5 36.Bc8 Qb5 37.Kg2 Rd3 38.Qe1 Qb3 0-1

30 Dlugy,M 2565 **- Benjamin** 2560

[A54] **USA, 1990**

Rivals meet again, in a tactical brawl. 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 e4 5.Ng5 Qe7 6.Qc2 Bf5 7.g4 Bg6 8.Bg2 e3 9.Qa4+ c6 10.Bxe3 Nxg4 11.Bf4 Nf6 12.0-0-0 h6 13.Nh3 Qd8 14.e4 Be7 15.e5 dxe5 16.dxe5 Nfd7 17.Be4 Bh5 18.Rd2 Bg4 19.Ng1 Qb6 20.Nge2 Nc5 21.Qc2 Nba6 22.Rg1 Nb4 23.Qb1 Be6 24.b3 Rd8

25.Rxd8+ 25.Rxg7 Nxa2+! 26.Rxa2 Bf8 27.Rg3 Nxb3+ 28.Kc2 Bxc4 would have given Black a dangerous attack. **25...Qxd8 26.Rd1 Qa5! 27.Kb2 Nba6 28.Nd4 0-0 29.Rg1 Kh8 30.a4** 30.Bf5!? **30...Rd8! 31.Bxh6** Desperation. **31...gxh6 32.Qc1 Bg5 33.Rxg5 hxg5 34.Qxg5** White threatens a perpetual, but there is no time. **34...Qxc3+!** Dlugy gave up, since if the queen is captured, the bishop at e4 falls to a checking fork. **0-1**

31 Benjamin 2530 - Alburt,L 2565
[B04] World Open, 1990

Alburt won the 1990 U.S. Championship, but earlier in the summer Benjamin hammered his beloved Alekhine Defense. **1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 g6 5.Bc4 Nb6 6.Bb3 Bg7 7.a4 a5 8.Qe2 0-0 9.h3 Nc6 10.0-0 Bf5 11.Nc3 Kh8!?** A new move, but it didn't make much of an impression. **12.Bf4 Nb4 13.Rfe1** The "right rook", since 13.Rad1 would be met by 13...d5! **13...Qc8 14.Ne4 f6 15.Bh2 fxe5 16.dxe5 Bxe4 17.Qxe4 d5 18.Qh4 e6 19.c3 Nd3!? 20.Re2 Qd8 21.Qd4**

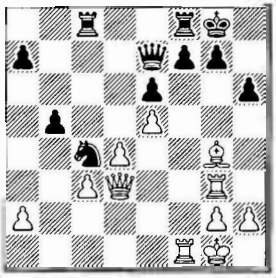
Black is pretty much obliged to sac the exchange here. **21...Rxf3** 21...c5 22.Qxd3 c4 23.Bxc4 Nxc4 24.b3 Nb6 25.Rd1 is crushing. **22.gxf3 Nc1!** A little tactic. **23.Rxc1 Qg5+ 24.Qg4 Qxc1+ 25.Kg2 Re8 26.Bf4 Qb1 27.Bc2** Black got the exchange back, but a fierce kingside attack is looming. **27...Qa2** To get the queen out via c4. **28.b3! Qa3** On 28...Qa1 Benjamin planned a strong sacrifice. 29.Bxg6!? hxg6 30.Qxg6 Black does not seem to be in imminent danger of anything worse than a draw, but the position is actually perilous, perhaps even hopeless. For example 30...Re7 *(30...Rg8 31.Bg5! Rf8 32.Bf6 Bxf6 33.Qh6+! Kg8 34.exf6 Rf7 35.Rxe6; 30...Rf8 31.Bh6 Bxh6 32.Qxh6+ Kg8 33.Qxe6+ Rf7 34.Qe8+ Kg7 35.e6 Rf5 36.Qe7+ Kg6 37.Qd8 Kh7 38.Qxc7+ Kh6 39.e7 Rg5+ 40.Qg3)* 31.Bg5 Rd7 32.Qxe6! and the queen infiltrates. 32...Bf8 *(32...Qa3 33.b4!)* 33.Qf6+ Kg8 34.e6 Re7 35.Bh6! Bxh6 36.Qxe7 with an easy win. **29.h4!** The attack cannot be repulsed. **29...Qf8 30.h5 Bh6** 30...gxh5 31.Qxh5 h6 32.Re1 and the

h-pawn falls anyway. 32...Rd8 33.Bxh6 Bxh6 34.Rh1 . **31.Bxh6 Qxh6 32.hxg6 hxg6 33.Re1 Kg8 34.Rh1 Qg7 35.Bxg6 Re7 36.Rh7! Qf8** 36...Qxh7 loses to 37.Bxh7+ Kxh7 38.Qh4+ . **37.Qh4! 1-0**

32 Benjamin 2540 - Dzindzichashvili,R 2555

[B12] U.S. Championship, 1991

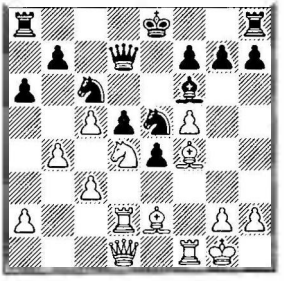
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.c3 e6 5.Be2 c5 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.0-0 Bg4 8.Be3 Bxf3 9.Bxf3 cxd4 10.cxd4 Nge7 11.Nc3 Nf5 12.Bg4 Nxe3 13.fxe3² 'f 13...Bb4 13...Be7 would have preserved the bishop. **14.Rf4 0-0 15.Qf3 Bxc3 16.bxc3 Qe7 17.Rf1 Rac8 18.e4! dxe4 19.Qxe4** White has opened up the game to his advantage. **19...Na5 20.R4f3 Nc4 21.Rh3 h6** 21...g6 22.Qf4 invades the dark squares. **22.Qd3 b5 23.Rg3**



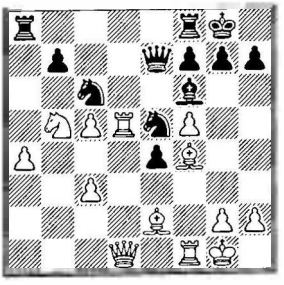
23...Rfd8 23...b4 seems stronger but 24.Bd1 threatens to set up a checkmating battery on the b1-h7 diagonal. 24...bxc3 *(24...Nb2 25.Qd2 bxc3 26.Qxh6 g6 27.Rh3* mates in three.) 25.Bc2 g6 26.Rf6! Nb2 allows mate in four: 27.Rfxg6+ fxg6 28.Qxg6+ Kh8 29.Qxh6+ Qh7 30.Qxh7# **24.Qe2 Rd7** 24...b4 25.Bh5 Rf8 26.Rgf3 bxc3 27.Bxf7+ Kh8 28.Rxc3 Rxf7 29.Rxf7 Qxf7 30.Rxc4 Rf8 is clearly better for White. **25.Bh5! Qh4** Passive defense with 25...Qf8 leads to 26.Rgf3 Rcc7 27.Kh1 a6 28.d5! and d6 follows, since 28...exd5 loses to 29.e6! Re7 30.Bxf7+ Kh8 31.Bg6; 25...Qe8 allows the break immediately. 26.d5 exd5 *(26...Rc5 27.dxe6 Qxe6 28.Bg4)* 27.e6! *(27.Bg4 Qxe5 28.Qxe5 Nxe5 29.Bxd7 Nxd7* is about even.) 27...Qxe6 28.Bxf7+ Qxf7 29.Rxf7 Rxf7 30.Rxg7+! Rxg7 31.Qe6+ Rf7 32.Qxc8+ Kg7 33 Qa6 Nd2 34.Qxb5 will win in the endgame.; 25...g6? is dismissed by 26.Bxg6 fxg6 27.Rxg6+ Kh7 28.Qh5; 25...Qd8 is a variation on the familiar theme 26.d5! Rc5 *(26...exd5* fails to the simple *27.Bg4* .) 27.Qg4 Qf8 28.dxe6 Nxe5 *(28...fxe6 29.Qxe6+* mates in four.) 29.exf7+ Kh8 30.Qe6 Rd8 permits a brilliant finish with 31.Rf6!! **26.Rg4 Qd8** 26...Qxh5 drops the queen to 27.Rxg7+ . **27.Qf2 Qf8 28.Qg3 b4?!** 28...Nb6!? might have given Black more counterplay. 29.Rgf4 Rcc7 30.Rf6 can be met by 30...Qa3 with problems on the queenside and no breakthrough on the kingside. **29.cxb4 Nd2?** 29...Nb6 was essential now. **30.Rd1 f5?"** A blunder in time pressure. 30...Nc4 was necessary, but 31.Rc1 Rdc7 32.a3 is still very difficult for Black. **31.exf6 Qxf6 32.Rf4 Qg5 33.Bg4! Kh8 34.Bxe6 Qh5 35.Qg4** Notes after Ftacnik and Blatny. **1-0**

33 Benjamin 2540 - Seirawan,Y 2615
[B12] U.S. Championship, 1991

Seirawan is the higher ranked player, but Benjamin outflanks him. **1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.c3 e6 5.Be2 Nd7 6.Nf3 Ne7 7.0-0 c5 8.dxc5 Nc6 9.b4 Ndxe5 10.Nd4 Bxb1 11.Rxb1 Be7 12.f4 Nd7 13.f5 e5 14.Nf3 e4 15.Nd4 Nde5 16.Bf4 a6 17.Rb2 Bf6 18.Rd2 Qd7**



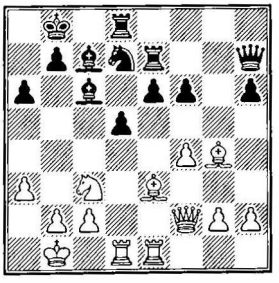
19.b5! Benjamin is not afraid of the resulting weak pawns on the c-file. **19...axb5 20.Nxb5 0-0 21.Rxd5** This secures a serious advantage for White. **21...Qe7 22.a4!**



Black tries to release the pressure at g5, but it backfires. **22...Bg5 23.Bxg5 Qxg5 24.f6!?** 24.Nd6 looks stronger. **24...g6** 24...gxf6 25.Nd6 Ne7 26.Rd4 f5 27.Rb4 and White is better. **25.Nd6 Qe3+ 26.Kh1 Qxc3 27.Nxe4 Qb4??** 27...Qe3 28.Nd6 Nb4 29.Rd4 Nbc6 30.Re4 and Black is in a bad way. **28.Qc1** The queen gets to h6. **1-0**

34 Benjamin 2540 - Gulko,B 2565
[B66] U.S. Championship, 1991

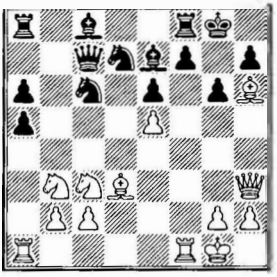
1.e4 Before running into Kamsky, Benjamin ran over former US Champion Gulko. **1...c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bg5 e6 7.Qd2 a6 8.0-0-0 h6 9.Bf4 Bd7 10.Nxc6 Bxc6 11.f3 d5 12.Qe1 Bb4 13.a3 Ba5 14.Bd2 Qe7 15.e5 Nd7 16.Kb1 Bb6 17.f4 f6 18.exf6 gxf6 19.Be2 0-0-0 20.Bf3 Qf7 21.Be3 Rhe8 22.Qe2 Qh7 23.Rhe1 Kb8 24.Bg4 Bc7 25.Qf2 Re7?!**



The e-pawn is now executed. **25...Qf7** was required. **26.Bxe6! Rxe6 27.Ba7+ Ka8 28.Rxe6 Qf5 29.Rde1 Qxf4 30.Re8 Rxe8 31.Rxe8+ Nb8 32.Rh8 Qxh2 33.Bd4 Be5 34.Bxe5 fxe5 35.Qf8 e4 36.Ne2 h5 37.g3 1-0**

35 Santo Roman,M 2495 - Benjamin 2555
[B82] Cannes, 1992

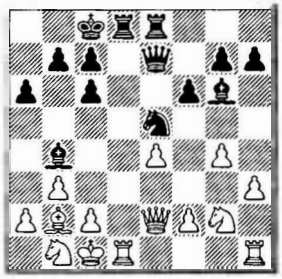
Joel doesn't fall for a deep trap, and quickly turns the tables. **1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Qb6 5.Nb3 Nf6 6.Nc3 e6 7.Be3 Qc7 8.f4 d6 9.Bd3 a6 10.a4 b6 11.0-0 Be7 12.Qf3 0-0 13.a5** A new move, but after the next few obvious moves it becomes clear that Santo Roman had missed something. **13...bxa5 14.e5 dxe5 15.fxe5 Nd7 16.Qh3 g6 17.Bh6**



This looks strong, since if the rook moves White will crash in. But the pawn at e5 is left undefended, and that is worth the exchange. **17...Ncxe5!** 17...Re8 18.Rxf7! Kxf7 19.Qxe6+!! wins spectacularly. 19...Kxe6 20.Bc4+ mates elegantly. A) 20...Kxe5 21.Re1+ Kf6 *(21...Kf5 22.Be6+ Kf6 23.Nd5#; 21...Kd6 22.Re6#)* 22.Nd5+ Kf5 23.Ne3+ Ke5 24.Ng4+ Kd6 25.Re6# Perhaps this is what Santo Roman had hoped for.; B) 20...Kf5 21.Rf1+ Kxe5 22.Re1+ Kf6 23.Nd5+ Kf5 24.Ne3+ Kf6 25.Ng4+ Kf5 26.Be6# **18.Bxf8 Bxf8 19.Ne4 f5 20.Nxa5?!** 20.Ng5 Qb6+ 21.Kh1 h6 is also good for Black. **20...Rb8! 21.Ng5?** 21.Nf2 Rxb2 22.Nd1 Nxd3! 23.cxd3 Bc5+ 24.Kh1 Rb8 is not quite as bad, but Black is a pawn up. **21...Nf6 22.b3 Nfg4** Black's attack is stronger. **23.Qg3 Bd6! 24.h3 Nxd3 25.Qxd3 Bc5+ 0-1**

36 Ivanov,A 2545 - Benjamin 2570
[C65] U.S. Championship, 1992

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.Qe2 a6 5.Bxc6 dxc6 6.b3 Bd6 7.Bb2 Qe7 8.d3 Bg4 9.Nbd2 Nd7 10.h3 Bh5 11.g4 Bg6 12.d4 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 Rhe8 14.dxe5 Nxe5 15.Ne1 f6 16.Ng2 Bb4 17.Nb1



Joel could just retreat the knight, but gives in to a temptation to get into a tactical melee. **17...Nf3!? 18.a3!?** 18.Qxf3 Bxe4 19.Qg3 Bd6 forces White to five up the exchange. 20.Rxd6 *(20.f4 Bxg2 21.Qxg2 Bxf4+ 22.Nd2 Rxd2!)* 20...Qxd6 21.Qxd6 cxd6 and Black wins. **18...Bd6 19.Nc3?** 19.Rd3 was correct. 19...Qxe4 *(19...Ng5 20.f3 Be5* is a an alternative strategy.*)* 20.Qxf3 Qxf3 21.Rxf3 Be4 22.Nd2! Bxf3 23.Nxf3 Re2 may not be enough. 24.Rf1 Bc5 25.Nf4 Rxf2

26.Rxf2 Be3+ 27.Rd2 Bxf4 28.Kd1 Bxd2 29.Nxd2 is not likely to be won by Black. **19...Bxe4 20.Nxe4 Qxe4 21.Qxe4 Rxe4 22.Rd3 Ng5 23.h4 Ne6 24.g5** White runs out of patience. **24...fxg5 25.hxg5 Rg4 26.Ne3 Rxg5 27.Rxh7 Rg1+ 28.Rd1 Rxd1+ 29.Nxd1 Bf4+ 30.Ne3 Bh6! 31.Kb1 Ng5 32.Bxg7 Nxh7 33.Bxh6 0-1**

37 Ivanov,I 2510 - Benjamin 2570

[A16] U.S. Championship, 1992

Having dispatch Alexander Ivanov in round two, Igor Ivanov is taken down in the 14th round. **1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Bc4 c5 8.e5 0-0 9.Qe2 Nc6 10.e6 Bxe6 11.Bxe6 fxe6 12.Qxe6+ Kh8 13.0-0**

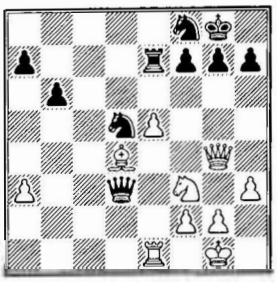
Even without the participation of the rook at a8, the kingside attack looks promising enough for Joel to invest the exchange. **13...Rxf3!? 14.gxf3 Ne5 15.f4 Nf3+ 16.Kg2 Nh4+ 17.Kg1 Nf3+ 18.Kg2 Nh4+ 19.Kg1 Qd3**

A last trick, before acknowledging that the sacrifice is only good for half a point. **20.Qg4??** 20.Qe3 draws. 20...Nf3+ 21.Kg2 Nh4+ 22.Kg1 *(22.Kh3?? Qxf1+ 23.Kxh4 Qg2!)* 22...Nf3+ etc. **20...Nf3+ 0-1**

38 Ibragimov,I 2540 - Benjamin 2570

[E52]Marshall Chess Club Int'l., 1992

More counter-punching as Benjamin defends his home turn in New York City. **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 0-0 5.Bd3 d5 6.Nf3 b6 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Ba6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.0-0 c5 11.Bb2 Bxd3 12.Qxd3 Nbd7 13.c4 cxd4 14.Qxd4 dxc4 15.Qxc4 Rc8 16.Qh4 Rc2 17.Rab1 Qc7 18.e4 Qc4 19.Rfe1 Re8 20.Bd4 Re2 21.Rxe2 Qxe2 22.Re1 Qd3 23.e5 Nd5 24.Qg4 Re7 25.h3 Nf8**

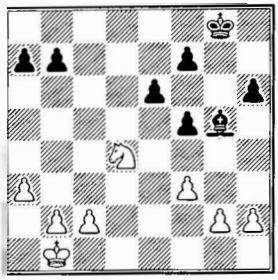


Benjamin has a solid defense and a queenside majority. Ibragimov decides to let the a-pawn go but gets little in return. 26.Qc8 26.Bb2 was wiser. 26...Qxa3 27.Rc1 Nf4 28.Kh2 N4e6 The defense cannot be penetrated, and the extra pawns proved decisive. 29.Be3 Qa4 30.Rc4 Qd7 31.Nh4 Re8 32.Qa6 Ng6 33.Nxg6 hxg6 34.Ra4 Qc7 35.f4 Re7 36.Rc4 Qb7 37.Rc8+ Kh7 38.Qxb7 Rxb7 39.g4 Rc7 40.Ra8 Rc3 41.f5 Rxe3 42.fxe6 fxe6 43.Rxa7 Rxe5 44.Rb7 b5 45.h4 g5 46.hxg5 Rxg5 47.Kg3 Kg6 48.Rb6 Kf6 49.Kh4 Rd5 50.Rb8 g6 51.Rf8+ Ke7 52.Rg8 g5+ 53.Kh5 Kd6 54.Rb8 Kc5 55.Re8 b4 0-1

39 Benjamin 2570 - Psakhis,L 2570

[C10] Reshevsky Memorial, 1992

A bit of endgame wizardry against a Soviet and Israeli champion. 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 dxe4 5.Nxe4 Nbd7 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6 7.Nf3 h6 8.Bh4 c5 9.Bb5+ Bd7 10.Bxd7+ Qxd7 11.Qe2 Be7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.dxc5 Qa4 14.Kb1 Rfd8 15.a3 Bxc5 16.Bxf6 gxf6 17.Nd2 Be7 18.Nb3 f5 19.f3 Rxd1+ 20.Rxd1 Rd8 21.Rxd8+ Bxd8 22.Qd2 Bg5 23.Qd4 Qxd4 24.Nxd4



The knight is every bit the match of the bishop here, and the queenside majority is cause for concern. 24...Bf4 25.h3 Be3 26.Nb5 Kg7 27.Nd6 b6 28.c3 Kf6 29.Kc2 Bf4 30.Nb5 a6 31.Nd4 Bd6 32.Kd3 e5 33.Ne2 Ke6 34.c4 f4 A risky move. 35.Nc3 Bc5 36.b4 Bg1 37.Nd5 a5 38.Ke4 f5+ 39.Kd3 axb4 40.axb4 Kd6 40...b5 41.Nc7+ 41.Kc3 Bf2 42.Kb3 b5 43.Nc3 bxc4+ 44.Kxc4 Bh4 45.b5 Bd8 46.Nd5 Bg5 47.b6 Kc6 Psakhis allowed the pawn to advance this far, so that the knight is tied to its defense, and the king must guard the knight. Benjamin lets the pawn go so that the king can infiltrate. 48.Nb4+ Kxb6 49.Kd5 e4 50.fxe4 fxe4 51.Kxe4 Kc7 52.Kf5 Kd7 53.Nd3 Ke8 54.Kg6 Joel wisely goes after the h-pawn, rather than the f-pawn. 54.Nxf4 Kf7 is unlikely to lose. 54...Ke7 55.Ne5 Ke6 56.Nf7 Be7 57.Nxh6 f3! 58.gxf3 Ke5 59.Nf5 Bf8 60.h4 Kf4 61.h5 Kxf3 62.Ng7 1-0

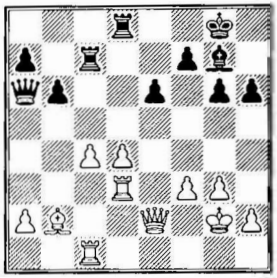
40 Gulko,B 2635 - Benjamin 2620
[A54] U.S. Championship, 1993

Benjamin defeats Gulko yet again, this time in a long and complex endgame. **1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 d6 4.d4 e4** This defense has been under scrutiny by Benjamin for many years, as he is writing about it in a forthcoming book. **5.Ng5 Bf5 6.f3 exf3 7.gxf3 c5 8.d5 g6 9.e4 Bc8 10.Be3 Bg7 11.Qd2 Nbd7 12.f4 0-0 13.Rg1 a6 14.a4 Re8 15.Bd3 Nf8 16.Rg3 Ng4 17.Bg1 h6 18.Nh3 f5 19.0-0-0 Bxc3 20.Qxc3 fxe4 21.Be2 Nf6 22.f5 Bxf5 23.Be3 Kh7 24.Nf4 Qe7 25.Rf1 Qe5 26.Qe1 b5 27.cxb5 axb5 28.Bxb5 Reb8 29.Qf2** 29.Qd2 gets demolished by 29...Rxb5 30.axb5 Ra1+ 31.Kc2 Rxf1 **29...Rxb5 30.axb5 Nxd5 31.Kb1 Nxf4 32.Qxf4 Qxf4 33.Rxf4** 33.Bxf4?? is blown away by 33...e3+ 34.Kc1 Ra1# **33...Ne6 34.Rf2 d5**

The situation is very bad for White, so Gulko tries to shake things up. **35.b4!? d4 36.bxc5 dxe3 37.Rxe3 Nxc5** Black has a large material advantage, but the endgame is nevertheless not so simple. **38.Rc2 Nd7 39.Rc7 Rb8 40.Rb3 Rb6 41.Rc6 Kg7 42.Kc1 Kf7 43.Rxb6 Nxb6 44.Rc3 Bd7 45.Re3 Nc4! 46.Rb3** 46.Rxe4 Bxb5 **46...e3 47.Kd1 Nd6 48.Ke2** 48.b6?? hangs the exchange to 48...Ba4; 48.Rd3 Bg4+ 49.Ke1 Nxb5 50.Rxe3 Nd4 51.Re4 Nf3+ 52.Kf2 Nxh2 53.Kg3 Bf5! also wins. **48...Bxb5+ 49.Kxe3 Kf6 50.Rb4 Ke5 51.Kf2 Bd3 52.Ra4 Bc4 53.Rb4 Bd5 54.Ra4 Nf5 55.Ra5 g5 56.Rb5 h5 57.Ra5 Ke4 58.Ra4+ Ke5 59.Ra5 g4 60.Rb5 h4 61.Ra5 Nd6 62.Kg1 Ne4 63.Ra4 Kf4 64.Kg2 Ke3 65.Ra3+ Ke2 66.Ra5 Nc3+ 67.Kg1 Ke1 68.Ra1+ Kd2 69.Kf2 Ne4+ 70.Kf1 Ng5 71.Ra5 Bc4+ 72.Kf2 Nh3+ 73.Kg2 Nf4+ 74.Kf2 Nh3+ 75.Kg2 Bd3 76.Ra4 Be2 77.Ra2+ Ke3 78.Ra3+ Bd3 79.Ra7 Be4+ 80.Kf1 Bd3+ 81.Kg2 Nf4+ 82.Kg1 Kf3 83.Rf7 Bc4 84.Rf5 Bd5 85.Rf8 g3** Finally, Black can break through! **86.hxg3 hxg3 87.Kf1 Kg4 0-1**

41 Wojtkiewicz,A 2580 - Benjamin 2585
[D78] Hudson International, 1993

Another example of maneuvering in home territory until opportunity presents itself. **1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 c6 5.d4 d5 6.Qb3 0-0 7.Nc3 dxc4 8.Qxc4 Bf5 9.0-0 Nbd7 10.e3 Nb6 11.Qe2 Ne4 12.Rd1 Nxc3 13.bxc3 Na4 14.Bd2 Be4 15.Be1 Qc7 16.Bf1 h6 17.Rac1 c5 18.c4 b6 19.Nd2 Bb7 20.Nb1 cxd4 21.exd4 Rac8 22.Nc3 Nxc3 23.Bxc3 e6 24.Bb2 Rfe8 25.Bg2 Bxg2 26.Kxg2 Qb7+ 27.f3 Qa6 28.Rd3 Rc7 29.Ra3 Qb7 30.Rb3 Rd8 31.Rd3 Qa6**

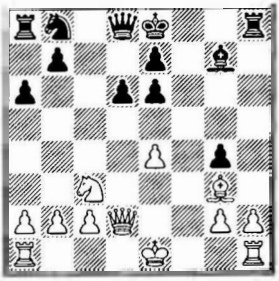


32.Kh3? An incomprehensible move. One of the kingside pawns should have advanced. 32...Qc8! The threat of discovered check, combined with the real threat of Rxc4, brings the point home quickly. 33.Rdd1 e5+ 34.Kg2 exd4 35.Qd3 Re7 36.Re1 Re3 37.Qd2 h5 38.Rcd1 Rxe1 39.Rxe1 Qxc4 40.Re7 Qxa2 0-1

42 Benjamin 2585 - Kaidanov,G 2620

[B90] Hudson International, 1993

Benjamin was an early battler in the wars surrounding the 6.Be3 Ng4 variation of the Najdorf, which is still all the rage. The game heats up quickly. 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 Ng4 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Be2 Bg7 10.Bg3 h5 11.Bxg4 Bxg4 12.f3 Be6 13.Qd2 g4 14.Nxe6 fxe6 15.fxg4 hxg4



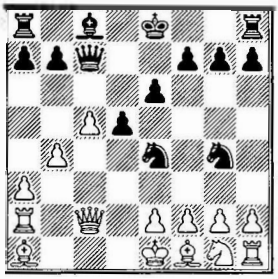
White now offers a pawn, but the penalty would be tripled pawns, too high a price. 16.e5 Nc6 16...Bxe5 17.Bxe5 dxe5 18.Qg5 Qb6 19.Qxe5 Rh7 20.Qg5! is very strong.; 16...dxe5 is similarly met by 17.Qg5 . 17.exd6 exd6 18.0-0 18.0-0-0 would also have been good, since 18...Bh6 19.Bf4 Qf6 20.Bxh6 Qxh6 21.Qxh6 Rxh6 22.Rxd6 is a superior endgame for White. 18...Qb6+ 19.Bf2 Qc7 19...Qxb2 20.Qxd6 Qxc3 21.Rad1 is a killer. 20.Qg5 Be5 20...Ne5 allows an attack from the flank with 21.Bh4! 21.Bg3 Qh7 21...Qb6+!? 22.Rf2 Qxb2 23.Bxe5 Qxa1+ 24.Rf1 Qxf1+ 25.Kxf1 Nxe5 26.Qg7 0-0-0 27.Ne4 is not so clear. 22.Qxg4! Bxg3 23.Qxg3 0-0-0 24.Rae1 e5 25.Ne4 d5 26.Ng5 Qxc2?! 27.Rf2 Qa4 28.Nf7! Rdg8 29.Qf3 Rf8 30.Qxd5 Qb4 31.Ref1 Nd4 32.Nd6+ Kc7 33.Rf7+ Rxf7 34.Rxf7+ Kd8 35.Nb5+! 1-0

43 Bareyev,E 2660 - Benjamin 2620

[E38] PCA Qualifier, 1993

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 c5 5.dxc5 Na6 6.a3 Qa5 7.Bd2 Nxc5

8.b3 d5!? Benjamin's innovation. **9.Ra2 Bxc3 10.Bxc3 Qb6 11.b4?** Taking up the challenge with 11.Bxf6 would have been wiser. **11...Nce4 12.c5 Qc7 13.Ba1?** 13.Bxf6 was still correct. **13...Ng4!**



14.Bxg7 14.Nh3 Nxh2 15.Bxg7 Rg8 16.Ba1 Nxf1 17.Kxf1 e5 would have been clearly better for Black. **14...Ngxf2 15.Bxh8 Nxh1 16.Nf3 f6** Black stands better. Of course the trapped minor pieces puts a lot of tactics on the board. **17.e3 Kf7 18.g4!** The best practical chance. **18...Bd7 19.Bxf6 Kxf6 20.Qb2+ Kf7 21.Qd4 Kg8 22.Bg2 Nhf2 23.Rxf2 Nxf2 24.Kxf2 Rf8 25.Kg1 Bb5 26.Ng5 Re8** 26...Qe7?! would lose the queen to 27.Nxe6! **27.Nf3** 27.Bxd5!? exd5 28.Qxd5+ is not dangerous if Black plays carefully, for example 28...Kg7 29.Qf5 Qd7! 30.Qxh7+ Kf6 31.Qh6+ Ke5 . **27...Qf7 28.e4?!** 28.Ne5 Qf6 29.Nf3 Qg6 30.h3 Rf8 31.Kh2 was relatively best. **28...dxe4 29.Qxe4** 29.Ne5? loses quickly to 29...Qf4 30.Qxe4 Qc1+ 31.Kf2 Qxa3-+; 29.Ng5 Qf4 is also good for Black. **29...Bc6 30.Qe3 Qf6** 30...e5! would have been more efficient. **31.Ne5! Rf8 32.h3 Bxg2** ›32...Bd5! **33.Kxg2 Qf4 34.Qxf4?** White had to try 34.Qe2 though 34...Qd4 35.Nc4 Qd5+ 36.Kg3 b6 is still a probable win as the rook gains more open files. **34...Rxf4** The endgame is a clear win. **35.c6 bxc6 36.Nxc6 a6 37.Nd8 e5 38.Nc6 e4 39.Ne7+ Kf7 40.Nf5 Ke6 0-1**

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44 Finegold,B 2470 - Benjamin 2610

[E33] U.S. Championship, 1994

White plays too ambitiously in the center and pays the price. **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 Nc6 5.Nf3 d6 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bd2 Qe7 8.a3 Bxc3 9.Bxc3 0-0 10.e3 a5 11.Be2 a4 12.h3 e5 13.d5 Nb8 14.g4 Nfd7 15.0-0-0 Nc5 16.Rdg1 g6 17.Nd2 Nba6 18.h4 Bd7 19.g5 h5 20.e4 c6 21.f4 cxd5 22.cxd5 Nb3+ 23.Nxb3 axb3 24.Qd1 Nc5 25.fxe5 Nxe4 26.Qxb3 Nxc3 27.bxc3 Qxe5**

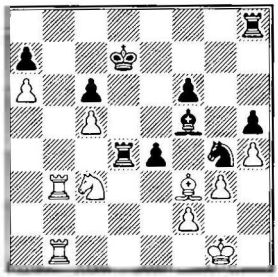
White's pawns are very weak and care is needed. **28.Bd1?** 28.Re1 Qe3+ 29.Kb2 Qd2+ is also difficult for White. **28...Rfc8 29.Kb2 Rc5 30.Re1 Qf4 31.Rhf1 Qd2+ 32.Qc2 Qxd5**

33.Rf4 Rca5 34.Rd4 Qc5 35.a4 Bxa4 0-1

45 Benjamin 2610 - Seirawan,Y 2585

[B12] U.S. Championship, 1994

Benjamin steals a pawn and grinds Seirawan in the endgame. 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.h4 h5 5.c4 e6 6.Nc3 Ne7 7.Nge2 Nd7 8.Ng3 Bg6 9.Bg5 f6 10.exf6 gxf6 11.Be3 Nb6 12.b3 dxc4 13.bxc4 Qc7 14.a4 0-0-0 15.a5 Nd7 16.Be2 Nf5 17.Nxf5 Bxf5 18.a6 b6 19.0-0 Ne5 20.c5 bxc5 21.Qb3 Ng4 22.Bf4 Bd6 23.Bxd6 Rxd6 24.dxc5 Rd4 25.g3 Qb8 26.Rfb1 Qxb3 27.Rxb3 e5 28.Bf3 e4 29.Rab1 Kd7

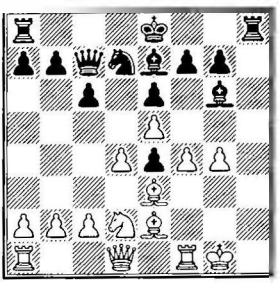


30.Rb7+ Ke6 31.Re1 Ne5 32.Bxe4 Bxe4 33.Rxe4 Rd3 34.Ne2 Kd5 35.Rf4 Re8 36.Kg2 Kxc5 37.Rxf6 Ra3 38.Rf5 Kc4 39.Rxh5 Rxa6 40.Rc7 Time 1-0

46 Browne,W 2535 - Benjamin 2610

[B07] U.S. Championship, 1994

Another game with Browne, another win for Joel! 1.d4 d6 2.e4 Nf6 3.Nc3 c6 4.Nf3 Bg4 5.Be2 e6 6.h3 Bh5 7.0-0 Be7 8.Be3 Nbd7 9.g4 Bg6 10.Nd2 d5 11.f3 Qc7 12.e5 h5 13.f4 hxg4 14.hxg4 The open h-file will lead to Browne's defeat. 14...Ne4 15.Ncxe4 dxe4



16.f5 exf5 17.gxf5 Nxe5! A surprising shot. 18.Nxe4 18.Bf4!?; 18.dxe5 Qxe5 gets to the White king quickly. 18...Nd3 19.Rf3 Qh2+ 20.Kf1 Nxb2 21.Qb1 Bxf5 22.Nf2 Bh3+ 23.Rxh3 Rxh3 24.Qxb2 Rxe3 25.Qxb7 Rd8 26.Bc4 Kf8 27.Qxc6 Qf4 28.Rd1 Rf3 0-1

47 Benjamin 2610 - Shabalov,A 2600

[B01] U.S. Championship, 1994

Benjamin's unusual anti-Scandinavian strategy pays off when he builds up a tremendous attack. 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.g3 c6 6.Bg2 Bg4 7.0-0 e6 8.h3 Bh5 9.d3 Nbd7 10.Ne2 Be7 11.Bd2 Qc7 12.b4 0-0 13.Rb1 Rad8 14.Nf4 Bg6 15.Re1 Rfe8 16.Qe2 Bf5 17.Nh4 g5 18.Nxf5 exf5 19.Ne6 fxe6 20.Qxe6+ Kg7 21.Qxf5 h6 22.Bc3 Nf8 23.Re3 Rd6 24.Rbe1 Kg8 25.h4

A tense situation. Perhaps Shabalov should have retreated the queen to d8 here, overprotecting important dark squares. **25...N6h7?! 26.Qe5! Nf6** The loss of time costs Shabalov dearly. **27.hxg5 Bd8 28.Qf5 Rxe3 29.Rxe3 hxg5 30.Qxg5 Qg7 31.Qf5 Rd7 32.Bh3 Rf7 33.Qc8 Bb6 34.Rf3 N6d7 1-0**

48 Benjamin 2610 **- Gavrikov,V** 2600
[B22] Credit Suisse, 1994

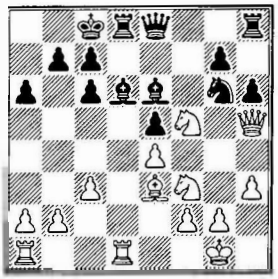
A nice attack in the endgame brings home the point. **1.e4 c5 2.c3 Nf6 3.e5 Nd5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Bc4 Nb6 6.Bb3 d5 7.exd6 Qxd6 8.0-0 Be6 9.Na3 c4 10.Bc2 g6 11.d4 cxd3 12.Nb5 Qd7 13.Qxd3 Qxd3 14.Bxd3 0-0-0 15.Be2 a6 16.Nbd4 Nxd4 17.cxd4 f6 18.Bd2 Nd5 19.Rfe1 Kd7 20.Bd1 Bg7 21.Ba4+ Kd6 22.Ba5 Rc8 23.Bb3 Rhe8 24.Bb4+ Nxb4 25.Rxe6+ Kc7 26.Ba4 b5 27.Bb3 Kd7 28.a3**

Black tries to gain mobility by trading a pair of rooks, but the consequences are serious. **28...Rc6 29.Rae1 Nd3 30.Rxc6 Kxc6 31.Re6+ Kd7 32.Rxa6 Nxb2 33.Bd5!** Black's minor piece cannot help defend. **33...Rb8 34.Bc6+ Kc7 35.d5 f5 36.Ne4 1-0** A slight diversion to reach e6. **36...Bh6 37.Ne6+ Kd6 38.f4 Nc4 39.Bb7+ Kd7 40.Bc6+ Kd6 41.Bxb5+ Nb6 42.Bc6** Black is suffocating, and blunders. **42...Nxd5?? 43.Bb7+ 1-0**

49 Benjamin 2610 **- Sokolov,I** 2625
[C69] Donner Memorial, 1994

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Bxc6 dxc6 5.0-0 f6 6.d4 Bg4 7.c3 Bd6 8.Be3 Ne7 9.Nbd2 Qd7 10.dxe5 fxe5 10...Bxe5 11.Nxe5 fxe5 *(11...Bxd1 12.Nxd7 Be2 13.Rfe1)* **12.f3 Be6 13.Nb3 Qxd1 14.Rfxd1 b6 11.h3 Be6** 11...Bxf3 12.Qxf3 0-0-0 13.Qg4; 11...Bh5 12.Nxe5 **12.Ng5** 12.c4 Ng6 13.c5 Be7 14.Qc2 0-0 15.Qc3 *(15 Rfd1 Bf6 16.Ng5)* 15...Bf6 16.Nc4. **12...Bg8 13.Qh5+ Ng6** Or 13...g6 with A) 14.Qh6 Nc8 15.f4 Bf8 *(15...exf4 16.Bd4 Bf8 17.Qh4 Bg7)*

16.Qh4 exf4 17.Bd4 Bg7; B) 14.Qf3 14...h6 *(14...0-0-0 15.Qf6)* 15.Qf6 hxg5 16.Qxh8 0-0-0 17.Bxg5 **14.Rfd1 0-0-0 15.Nf1** 15.Nb3 **15...Qe8 16.Ng3 h6 17.Nf3 Be6** 17...Nf4 18.Qxe8 Rxe8 19.Rd2 Be6; 17...Bf7 18.Nf5 Rg8 *(18...Nf4 19.Qg4)* **18.Nf5**

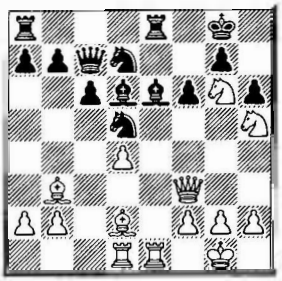


18...Qf7 18...Rd7 19.Rd2 Nf4; 18...Bxf5 19.Qxf5+ Rd7 20.Rd2 Rf8 was a more promising defense. **19.Rxd6! cxd6** 19...Rxd6 20.Qxg6 Qxg6 21.Ne7+ Kb8 22.Nxg6 is very strong for White. **20.Qxg6 Qxg6 21.Ne7+ Kc7 22.Nxg6 Rhe8 23.a4 Rd7 24.a5 Bg8 25.Nd2 Bh7 26.Nh4 d5 27.exd5 Rxd5** 27...cxd5 28.Nhf3 is also bad for Black. **28.Nhf3 Bd3 29.c4 Rd6 30.Re1 Kd7 31.Bc5 Rde6 32.Re3 e4 33.Ne1 1-0**

50 Benjamin 2620 - van der Sterren,P 2605

[A13] SKA Munich, 1994

Paul van der Sterren is a theoretician, so Joel deviates from his usual play. **1.c4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.cxd5 Nf6 5.Bb5+ Nbd7 6.Nc3 Be7 7.d4 0-0 8.Nf3 Nb6 9.0-0 Nbxd5 10.Re1 c6 11.Bc4 Be6 12.Bb3 h6 13.Ne5 Re8 14.Qf3 Bf8 15.Bd2 Nb4 16.Ne4 Nbd5 17.Ng3 Nd7 18.Rad1 Qc7 19.Nh5 f6 20.Ng6 Bd6**



Black's pieces are not in position to defend, so Benjamin pounces on his helpless prey. **21.Nxg7! Kxg7 22.Qh5 Bxh2+ 23.Kf1 Bf4 24.Nxf4 Nxf4 25.Bxf4 Qxf4 26.Bxe6 Re7 27.Rd3 Rae8 28.Rg3+** This effectively ends matters. **28...Qxg3 29.fxg3 Rxe6 30.Qxe8 Rxe8 31.Rxe8 Kf7 32.Ra8 Ke6 33.Rxa7 b5 34.Ke2 f5 35.Kf3 Nf6 36.a3 Ng4 37.b3 Nf6 38.a4 Ne4 39.a5 Nd2+ 40.Kf4 Nxb3 41.a6 1-0**

51 De Firmian,N 2580 - Benjamin 2620

[B40] New York Open, 1994

Joel is down the exchange in the endgame, but his pawns provide all the force necessary to win. **1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.Nc3 Nc6 4.g3 Nge7 5.Bg2 d5 6.0-0 d4 7.Ne2 g6 8.d3 Bg7 9.Nh4 0-0 10.f4 f5 11.e5 g5 12.Nf3 g4 13.Nd2 Rb8 14.Nc4 b6 15.Nd6 Bd7 16.c3 Nc8 17.Nxc8 Rxc8 18.cxd4 Nxd4 19.Nxd4 cxd4 20.Bd2 Bc6 21.Qb3 Qd7 22.Rac1 Bxg2 23.Kxg2 Kf7 24.Kg1 h5 25.a4 Rfd8 26.Bb4 Qb7**

27.Bd6 h4 28.gxh4 Bh6 29.Rxc8 Rxc8 30.Bb4 Rc6 31.Bd2 Qc8 32.Qd1 Qa6 33.Be1 Qc8 34.Bd2 Qa6 35.Qb3 Qc8 36.h5 Rc2 37.Bc3 Re2 38.Qd1 Rxh2 39.Kxh2 dxc3 40.bxc3 Qxc3

At the end of first time control White is up a full exchange, but the White pawns are very weak and the rook cannot get to a useful open file. 41.Kg3 Qd4 42.Qd2 Bf8!? First Joel activates the bishop. 42...Qxa4 was probably safer. 43.Rd1 Bc5 44.Qe2 Kg7 45.Qd2 Kh6! The bold king grabs the h-pawn, not fearing the resulting open files. 46.Rf1 46.Rh1 46...Kxh5! 47.Qh2+ Kg6 48.Qh8 Playing for mate at all costs, but the tactics have been miscalculated. 48...Qxd3+ 49.Kh2 Kf7 50.Qf6+ Ke8 51.Qxe6+ Kd8 52.Qg8+ Kc7 53.Qh7+ Kb8 54.Rg1 White enters a hopeless queen and pawn endgame. 54...Bxg1+ 55.Kxg1 Qg3+ 56.Kh1 Qe1+ 57.Kg2 Qe2+ 58.Kg1 Qe3+ 59.Kg2 Qf3+ 60.Kg1 Time control reached, time to go home. 0-1

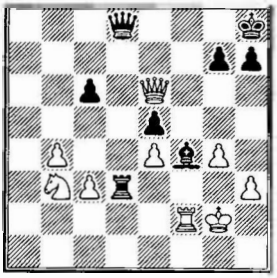
52 Benjamin 2565 - Kaidanov,G 2580
[B50] U.S. Championship, 1996

Joel has scored well against Kaidanov in recent Championships. 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.c3 Nf6 4.Be2 g6 5.0-0 Bg7 6.Bb5+ Nc6 7.d4 0-0 8.d5 Na5 9.Re1 e6 10.dxe6 Bxe6 11.Ba4 d5 12.e5 Ne4 13.Nbd2 Bf5 14.Nxe4 dxe4 15.Qxd8 Raxd8 16.Ng5 Rd5 17.e6 fxe6 18.Nxe4 a6 19.Ng3 b5 20.Bd1 Bd3 21.Bg4

Benjamin has achieved a solid advantage. 21...Kh8? Kaidanov jettisons the pawn, but doesn't get much in return. 21...Bf5 was best. 22.Bxe6 Re5 23.Rxe5 Bxe5 24.Bh6 Re8 25.Bf7 Re7 26.Rd1 c4 27.Bd5 Bf6 28.f3 Rd7 29.Re1 Rd8 30.Re6 The a-pawn is doomed. 30...Bh4 31.Rxa6 Rxd5 32.Rxa5 Kg8 33.a4 Bd8 34.Rxb5 Rxb5 35.axb5 Bb6+ 36.Kh1 Kf7 37.Ne4 Ke6 38.Bg7 Kd5 39.Bd4 Bd8 40.Kg1 Bc2 41.b6 Kc6 42.Kf2 1-0

53 Svidler,P 2660 - Benjamin 2580
[C60]World Team Championship, 1997

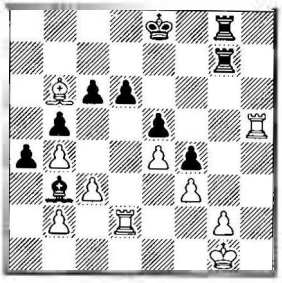
Svidler is a rising star, now in the top ten in the world. 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Bc5 6.c3 b5 7.Bc2 d6 8.a4 Bg4 9.h3 Bh5 10.b4 Bb6 11.axb5 axb5 12.Rxa8 Qxa8 13.Na3 Nd8 14.Nxb5 Nxe4 15.d4 0-0 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.Qe2 f5 Black has achieved equality, at least. 18.Kh2 c6 19.Na3 Bc7 20.g4 Bf7 20...Nxc3 21.Qc4+ Nd5 22.gxh5 e4+! must have been overlooked. 21.Bxe4 fxe4 22.Ng5 Bg6 23.Qc4+ Kh8 24.Nxe4 White is clearly better now. 24...Ne6 25.f3 Nf4 26.Bxf4 Rxf4 27.Nb1 Bb6 28.Nbd2 Rf8 29.Kg2 Be3 30.Qe2 Bf4 31.Nb3 Bxe4 32.fxe4 Qa3 33.Qc2 Qa6 34.Nc5 Qc4 35.Qd3 Qg8 36.Qd7 Rd8 37.Qe6 Rd2+ 38.Rf2 Qd8 39.Nb3 Rd3!



This move turns the tables, and Benjamin invades enemy territory despite the weakness of his own back rank. 40.Rf3 Rxf3 41.Kxf3 Qd3+ 42.Kf2 Qe3+ 43.Kf1 Qf3+ 44.Ke1 Qxc3+ 45.Kf2 Qe3+ 46.Kf1 Qf3+ 47.Ke1 Qg3+ 48.Ke2 Qe3+ 49.Kf1 Qxh3+ 50.Kf2 Qg3+ 51.Kf1 Qd3+ 52.Kf2 Qe3+ 53.Kf1 Qf3+ 54.Ke1 Qxe4+ Benjamin has methodically picked off the White pawns and is now winning. 55.Kf1 Qf3+ 56.Ke1 Qe3+ 57.Kf1 Qd3+ 58.Kf2 Be3+ 59.Ke1 h6 60.Qc8+ Kh7 61.Qf5+ Qxf5 62.gxf5 Kg8 63.Na5 Kf7 64.Ke2 Bb6 65.Kd3 Kf6 66.Ke4 c5 67.Nc6 c4 68.b5 c3 69.Nb4 Ba5 70.Nd5+ Kg5 71.Kd3 e4+ 72.Kc2 Kxf5 73.b6 Bxb6 74.Nxb6 h5 75.Nd5 h4 76.Kxc3 h3 77.Ne3+ Kf4 78.Nf1 g5 0-1

54 Benjamin 2580 - Kaidanov,G 2600
[C77] U.S. Championship, 1997

Another fine endgame win against Kaidanov. 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.Nc3 b5 6.Bb3 Be7 7.d3 d6 8.Nd5 Na5 9.Nxe7 Qxe7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Bg5 h6 12.Bh4 g5 13.Bg3 Bg4 14.h3 Bh5 15.Qe2 Kg7 16.Qe3 Nd7 17.Nd2 Nb6 18.c3 Nxb3 19.axb3 a5 20.d4 f6 21.Qd3 c6 22.f3 Bf7 23.Rfd1 Rfb8 24.Bf2 Be6 25.b4 a4 26.Qe2 Qc7 27.Be3 Nc4 28.Nxc4 Bxc4 29.Qf2 Qe7 30.Rd2 Bb3 31.h4 Rg8 32.dxe5 fxe5 33.hxg5 hxg5 34.Qg3 Kf7 35.Kf2 Rg7 36.Rh1 Qf6 37.Rh5 Rag8 38.Bb6 Ke8 39.Kg1 Qf4 40.Qxf4 gxf4

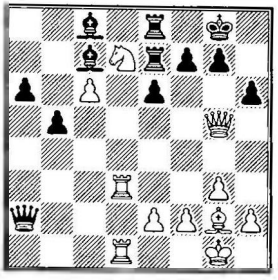


At the start of the second time control White's advantage is small, but it grows. 41.g4! d5 41...fxg3 42.Rxd6 Ke7 43.Bc5 is overpowering. 42.Rxe5+ Re7 43.Rxe7+ Kxe7 44.Rd4 Kd7 45.e5 Rf8 46.e6+! Kxe6 47.Bc7 Re8 48.Bxf4 Two connected passed pawns are enough. 48...Kf6 49.Kf2 Rh8 50.Rd2 Rh1 51.Be3 d4 52.Bxd4+ Kg6 53.Kg3 Bd5 54.f4 Re1 55.Rh2 Rd1 56.f5+ Kf7 57.g5 Rf1 58.Rf2 Rg1+ 59.Kf4 Re1 60.g6+ Ke7 61.f6+ Ke6 62.f7 1-0

55 Benjamin $_{2580}$ - Kaidanov,G $_{2600}$

[E03] U.S. Championship, 1997

The kingside lies dormant for a long time, but Benjamin eventually gets around to blowing it up. 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 dxc4 5.Qa4+ Nbd7 6.Bg2 a6 7.Qxc4 b5 8.Qc6 Ra7 9.Be3 Nd5 10.Qc1 c5 11.Nc3 Nxc3 12.Qxc3 Nb6 13.dxc5 Nd5 14.Qd2 Nxe3 15.Qxe3 Qa5+ 16.Nd2 Qb4 17.Rc1 Rc7 18.0-0 Qxb2 19.Rfd1 Be7 20.c6 0-0 21.Rb1 Qa3 22.Nb3 Bd8 23.Rd3 Re7 24.Rbd1 Bc7 25.Nc5 Qxa2 26.Nd7 Rfe8 27.Qg5 h6

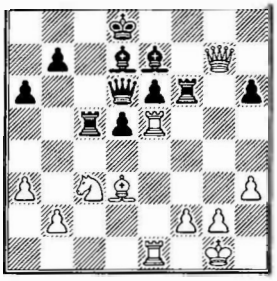


28.Nf6+! Kh8 29.Qh4 gxf6 30.Qxh6+ Kg8 31.Rd4 f5 32.Qg5+ Kf8 33.Qh6+ Kg8 34.Qg5+ Kf8 35.Qf6 Be5 36.Qxe5 f6 37.Qxf6+ Rf7 38.Qh6+ Kg8 39.Qg6+ Kf8 40.Qh6+ Kg8 41.Rd8 Rfe7 42.Qg6+ Kf8 43.Qf6+ 1-0

56 Benjamin $_{2580}$ - Christiansen,L $_{2550}$

[C02] U.S. U.S. Championship, 1997

Larry Christiansen has had great success against Benjamin, but Joel turned the tables in the 1997 Championship. He let the win slip here but won two later games, as we shall see. 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bd7 6.Be2 Nh6 7.a3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Nf5 9.Nc3 Rc8 10.0-0 Be7 11.Bd3!? Ncxd4 A new and complicated plan. 12.Nxd4 Nxd4 13.Qg4 Nb3 14.Qxg7 Rf8 15.Rb1 Nxc1 16.Rfxc1 Qb6 17.Qg4 Kd8 18.Rc2 f6 19.exf6 Rxf6 19...Bxf6!? was to be considered. 20.Re1 h6 21.h3 a6 22.Rce2 Rc5 23.Qg7 Qd6 24.Re5

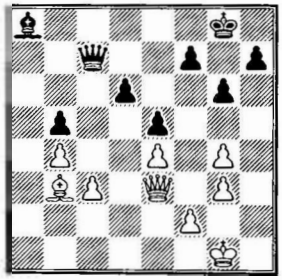


24...Rxc3! 25.bxc3 Qxa3 26.Bg6! Benjamin offers the remaining c-pawn. 26...Qxc3 27.R5e3 Qd2 28.R1e2 28.R3e2? loses to 28...Qg5 . 28...Qd4? 28...Qd1+ 29.Re1 Qd2 would have maintained the balance. 29.Bf7! Qd1+ 30.Re1 Qc2 31.R3e2 Qf5 32.Bxe6 Bxe6 33.Rxe6 Qxf2+ 34.Kh1 Rxe6 35.Qg8+! Kc7 36.Qxe6 The fireworks are over. Black has a material advantage but the rook and queen are a powerful attacking force and the bishop is not in a position to help with the defense. 36...Bg5 37.Qe5+ Kc6 38.Qc3+ Qc5 39.Re6+ Kb5 40.Qb3+ Ka5 41.Qa2+ Kb4 42.Qb2+ Ka5 43.Qa2+ Kb4 44.Qb2+ Ka5 45.Re1! b5 The only move. 46.Qa1+? Tempting, but more accurate was 46.Qa2+ Kb6 47.Ra1 d4 48.Qxa6+ Kc7 49.Qa8! d3 50.Ra7+ Kd6 51.Qb8+ Kd5 52.Rc7! and White wins. 46...Kb6 47.Re6+ Kb7 48.Qxa6+ Kc7 49.Re1 d4 50.Qe6 Qc4! The most accurate defense, which preserves the draw. 51.Qe5+ Kb7 52.Qe4+ Kb6 53.Qg6+ Kc5 54.Qf5+ Kb6 55.Qg6+ Kc5 56.Qf5+ Kb6 57.Qg6+ ½-½

57 Benjamin 2580 - Ivanov,A 2565

[C92] U.S. Championship, 1997

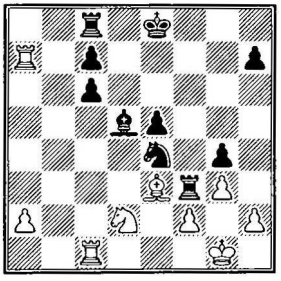
Joel takes on Alexander Ivanov on the latter's home turf, in the main lines of the Spanish Game. Benjamin applies the Spanish Inquisition and makes Ivanov suffer. 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Bb7 10.d4 Re8 11.Nbd2 Bf8 12.d5 Nb8 13.Nf1 Nbd7 14.N3h2 Nc5 15.Bc2 c6 16.dxc6 Bxc6 17.Bg5 Be7 18.Bxf6 Bxf6 19.Ng4 Bg5 20.b4 Ne6 21.Qf3 a5 22.a3 Qc7 23.Nge3 g6 24.Bb3 axb4 25.axb4 Bxe3 26.Qxe3 Nf4 27.g3 Nh5 28.Nh2 Nf6 29.Ng4 Nxg4 30.hxg4 Rxa1 31.Rxa1 Ra8 32.Rxa8+ Bxa8



Not a lot to work with here but White does have the better bishop and a pawn structure that is easier to defend. 33.Qd3 Bc6 34.g5 Qe7 35.Qf3 Kg7 36.c4! Qxg5? 36...Be8 was needed. 37.cxb5 Qc1+ 38.Kg2 Be8 39.Qd3 Qb2 40.b6 Bc6 41.Qc4 d5 42.Qxc6 Qxb3 43.Qd6 1-0

58 Gulko,B 2580 - Benjamin 2580
[A29] U.S. Championship, 1997

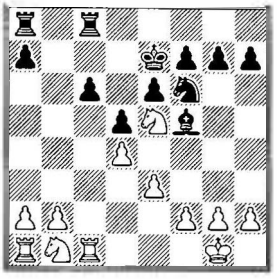
Benjamin applies the pressure until Gulko blunders in a tough position. 1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.Bg2 Nb6 7.0-0 Be7 8.Rb1 g5 9.b4 g4 10.Ne1 Nxb4 11.Nc2 Nc6 12.Bxc6+ bxc6 13.d4 f6 14.dxe5 Qxd1 15.Rxd1 fxe5 16.Nb4 Bf5 17.e4 Bxb4 18.Rxb4 Be6 19.Bg5 Rf8 20.Rb2 Rf3 21.Nb1 Rc8 22.Rc1 Nc4 23.Rb7 Nd6 24.Rxa7 Nxe4 25.Be3 Bd5 26.Nd2?



26.a4 Rb8 27.Rxc7 Rb2 would have been unpleasant, but not immediately fatal. 26...Rxe3! 27.fxe3 Nxd2 28.a4 Kd7 29.Rb7 Ra8 30.Rb4 Ne4 31.Rd1 Ke6 32.Rb7 Rxa4 33.Rxc7 Ng5 White resigned. The king will soon be under attack from all directions. 0-1

59 Benjamin 2580 - Christiansen,L 2550
[D12] U.S. Championship, 1997

A quiet Exchange Slav nets Joel a pawn, and Benjamin sends Christiansen down to defeat in the second game of the final match. 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.Qb3 Qc8 7.Bd2 Nc6 8.Bb5 e6 9.0-0 Bd6 10.Bb4 Qc7 11.Qa3 Bxb4 12.Qxb4 Qe7 13.Bxc6+ bxc6 14.Qxe7+ Kxe7 15.Ne5 Rhc8 16.Rc1

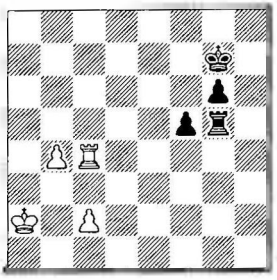


White is a bit better, but Black lets the pawn go without a fight. 16...Nd7 16...Ng4!? 17.Nxc6+ Kd6 18.Na3 a6 19.Na5 Rab8 20.Nb3 Rxc1+ 21.Rxc1 a5 22.Nxa5 g5 23.Rc3 g4 24.Rb3 Ra8 25.Nb5+ Ke7 26.Ra3 Kf6 27.Nc6 Rc8 28.Rc3 Ra8 29.a3 h5 30.b3 h4 31.a4 h3 32.Nd6 Bg6 33.g3 Ra6 34.a5 Nb6 35.Ne8+ Kg5 36.Nc7 Nc4 37.Nxa6 Nd2 38.Ne5 f6 39.Nxg6 1-0

60 Christiansen,L 2550 - Benjamin 2580
[B08] U.S. Championship, 1997

An exciting game with opposite wing castling leads to a rook and two pawn endgame, also on the flanks. One would expect a draw, but... 1.d4 d6 2.e4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Bf4 0-0 6.Qd2 Bg4 7.0-0-0 c6 8.Bh6 Qa5 9.Kb1 Nbd7 10.Be2 e5 11.Bxg7 Kxg7 12.h3 Bxf3 13.Bxf3 b5 14.g4 Nb6 15.h4 Nc4 16.Qc1 Rab8 17.dxe5 dxe5 18.h5 Ng8 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.Be2

Rfd8 21.Bxc4 bxc4 22.Rxd8 Qxd8 23.f4 Qd4 24.Ka1 exf4 25.Qxf4 Re8 26.a3 Qe5 27.Qe3 Re7 28.g5 a5 29.Ka2 Re6 30.Rh4 Re8 31.Rh1 Ne7 32.Rf1 Nf5 33.Qf2 Nd6 34.Qf6+ Qxf6 35.Rxf6 Nxe4 36.Nxe4 Rxe4 37.Rxc6 Re5 38.Rxc4 Rxg5 39.b4 axb4 40.axb4 f5

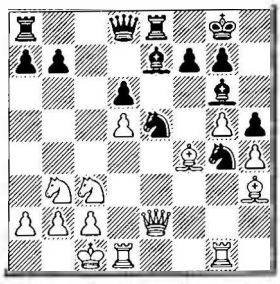


41.b5 41.Kb3 would bring the king into a better defensive position. 41...f4 42.Rc7+ 42.Rxf4 Rxb5 43.c4 would have held the draw. 42...Kf6 43.b6? Ra5+ 44.Kb3 Rb5+ 45.Kc4 Rxb6 46.Kd4 Kf5 47.Kd3 Re6 48.Rf7+ Kg4 49.c4 f3 50.c5 Kg3 0-1

61 Plaskett,J 2445 - Benjamin 2595

[A41] Europe vs. Americas, 1998

1.d4 Benjamin's new wave opening is too solid for the hyper-aggressive Plaskett, but opening up the game did not work out the way he wanted it to. 1...Nf6 2.Nf3 d6 3.Nc3 Bg4 4.e4 e6 5.h3 Bh5 6.Qe2 c6 7.Bg5 Nbd7 8.0-0-0 Qa5 9.g4 Bg6 10.d5 cxd5 11.exd5 e5 12.Nd4 Be7! 13.Nb3 Qd8 14.f4 exf4 15.Bxf4 0-0 16.h4 h5 17.g5 Ng4 18.Bh3 Nde5 19.Rhg1 Re8

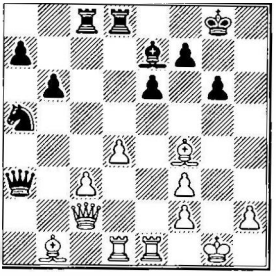


20.Bxg4 Nxg4 21.Rxg4 Overoptimistic. 21...Bf8! 22.Qg2 hxg4 23.Qxg4 Qc8! Benjamin will have fun on the light squares! 24.Qf3 Bf5 25.Qg3 Bg4 26.Rg1 Bh5 27.Bxd6 Bxd6 28.Qxd6 Qc4 29.Qc5 Qxh4 0-1

62 Benjamin 2595 - Zimmer,R 2225

[B22] US Amateur Team East, 1998

We close with a game from the 1998 Amateur Team Championship. Joel doesn't shy from playing in tournaments with lesser competition, and enjoys meeting the chess fans. Then he teaches them a lesson at the board! 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 Qxd5 5.d4 Nf6 6.Be3 cxd4 7.cxd4 Nc6 8.Nc3 Qd6 9.a3 Be7 10.Bd3 0-0 11.Qc2 h6 12.0-0 b6 13.Rad1 Bb7 14.Rfe1 Rac8 15.Qc1 Nd5 16.Bxh6 Na5 17.Bb1 Nxc3 18.bxc3 Bxf3 19.gxf3 Rfd8 20.Bf4 Qxa3 21.Qc2 g6

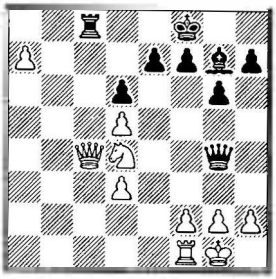


Does Black, a master, really think the puny pawns will defend the naked king? 22.Rxe6! Rc6 22...fxe6 23.Qxg6+ Kf8 24.Bh6# 23.Bc1 Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide! 23...Qxc1 24.Qxc1 Rxe6 25.f4 The attack is not over. 25...Rc6 26.f5 gxf5 27.Kh1! Rg6 28.Bxf5 It's all over. 28...Rg5 29.Qf4 Rd6 30.Re1 Rd5 31.Be4 Bd6 32.Qf6 1-0

63 Benjamin 2595 - Weber,J

[B52] US Amateur Team East, 1998

Benjamin creates a passed pawn and makes a queen, with a pretty combination along the way. 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7 4.Bxd7+ Nxd7 5.0-0 Ngf6 6.d3 b5 7.c3 g6 8.a4 b4 9.cxb4 cxb4 10.a5 Bg7 11.Qa4 Rb8 This leaves the a-pawn without a defender. 12.Be3 0-0 13.Bxa7 Ra8 14.Bd4 Nc5 15.Qxb4 Rb8 16.Qc4 Nb3 17.Ra3 Nxd4 18.Nxd4 Rxb2 19.Nc3 Qd7 20.Na4 Rbb8 21.Nb6 Qg4 22.Nc6 Rb7 23.Nd5 Nxd5 24.exd5 Qe2 25.a6 Rc7 26.Rb3 Rfc8 27.Rb7 Kf8 28.Rxc7 Rxc7 29.a7 Rc8 30.Nd4 Qg4



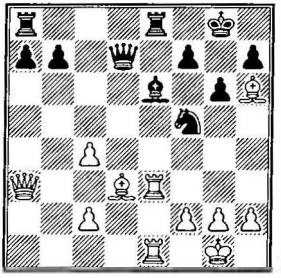
31.Ne6+! Qxe6 32.dxe6 Rxc4 33.a8Q+ 1-0

64 Benjamin 2595 - Kudrin,S 2565

[B53] Toronto Open, 1998

Black's third move is used to avoid some offbeat lines in the Sicilian but Joel uncorks some home cooking. When the position settles down, he has the endgame advantage and drives the point home. 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 Nf6 4.dxc5 4.Nc3 cxd4 5.Nxd4 leads to normal Sicilians. 4...Qa5+ 5.Nc3 Nxe4 6.cxd6 Nxc3 7.bxc3 exd6 8.Bd3! There is no need to defend the weak c-pawn, and no real reason for Black to capture it. 8...Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Rb1 Nd7 11.Re1 Bf6 12.Rb5 White has a strong initiative and gives up the a-pawn to accelerate the attack. 12...Qxa2 13.Ng5 Bxg5 14.Rxg5 g6 The kingside will not fall quickly, so Joel takes time to recover the pawn. 15.Bf1 Nc5 16.Qxd6 Ne6 17.Rg3 Ng7 18.Bh6 Be6 19.Bd3 Qd5 White has nothing concrete in the middlegame, but certainly does not want to enter an

endgame just yet. **20.Qa3 Rfe8 21.Rge3 Nf5 22.c4 Qd7**



Black has overlooked something! **23.Bxf5! Bxf5 24.Qxa7! f6 25.Qb6** Now Black has some reason to regret letting the doubled c-pawn live, but with bishops of opposite color, has hopes of holding the game. **25...Rxe3 26.Bxe3 Qc6 27.Qb2 Rd8 28.c5! Kf7 29.h3 g5** Dreams of a kingside attack? **30.Bd4! Rd7 31.Re3 Re7 32.Qb3+ Re6 33.Rf3! Qe4 34.Bxf6! Qxc2** 34...Kxf6 35.g4 **35.Qxc2 Bxc2 36.Bxg5+ Kg6 37.Be3 Be4 38.Rf4 Bc6 39.Kh2 Kg7 40.Bd4+ Kg6 1-0**

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B08	60
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B12	33
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B22	48
B22	62
B30	19
B38	3
B40	51
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B52	63
B53	64
B60	6
B66	16
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B81	21
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E15	18
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E61	29
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$4.95

United States Champion Joel Benjamin is one of the top American players of all time, with a record 16 consecutive United States Championship participations. He has represented the United States in numerous Olympiads and World Team Championships. Benjamin has reached the qualifying stages of the World Championship three times, and is likely to have another chance soon.

This sampling of Benjamin's games will give the reader a good idea of the style and technique he has used to win titles. A tremendous counter-puncher, Benjamin's attacks often explode from seemingly blockaded positions. His pieces seem to be retreating only to turn and bravely attack the foe. Indeed, his middlegame style is distinctly individual, relying on strong endgame play to take advantage when his late middlegame attacks do not.

Prolific tournament bulletin editor Bill Haines has selected 64 games to represent Joel Benjamin's successful play at the board. National Mas[illegible] Eric Schiller has contributed a biographical ske[illegible] light notes to the games, which give great p[illegible] when played through.

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